

March 2016

Rethinking the Creative Economy: Participatory Action Research with Artists and Artisans in the Greater Franklin County

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**Rethinking the Creative Economy:
Participatory Action Research with Artists and Artisans
in the Greater Franklin County**

A Dissertation Presented

by

LEO L. HWANG

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2016

Geosciences

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**Rethinking the Creative Economy:
Participatory Action Research with Artists and Artisans
in the Greater Franklin County**

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by

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DEDICATION

To all the artists and artisans of Western Massachusetts, but in particular the artist and artisan researchers who made this project possible: Kiran Bhowmik, Don Campbell, Judi Campbell, Andy Chase, Morning Start Chenven, Heather Cohen, Moonlight Davis, Eric Deluca, Jeanne Douillard, Amy Gardiner, Jerilyn Kolbin, Phyllis Labanowski, Al Ladd, Zoe Ma, Daniel Mahoney, Kim Parkhurst, Robin Parsons, Brad Peters, Cheryl Rezendes, Jessamyn Smyth, Rochleigh Wholfe, and Diane Worth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my co-coordinator Abby Templer for her insights and thoughtfulness; the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project's artist and artisan researchers and our interviewees for all their continued work to make a diverse, community centered, creative economy; the Community Economies Collective; J.K. Gibson-Graham; my advisors Professor Julie Graham and Professor Richard Wilkie for support and assistance; the University of Massachusetts President's Creative Economy Fund; the Massachusetts Cultural Council's John and Abigail Adams Grant; the Fostering Art and Culture Project; Greenfield Community College; and of course my dissertation committee that in addition to Professor Wilkie includes Professor Eve Vogel, Professor Rita Hardiman, and Professor George Roberson.

ABSTRACT

RETHINKING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH WITH ARTISTS AND ARTISANS IN THE GREATER FRANKLIN COUNTY

FEBRUARY, 2016

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The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project utilized a participatory action research methodology with an asset-based approach to examine the noncapitalist practices of artists and artisans in the context of a community economy. By privileging noncapitalist practices, the contributions of artists and artisans can be assigned value, where no or little value was assigned before. In the context of creative economy development, by ignoring the diverse economy of artists and artisans there is a real danger of continuing a narrative of deficits and a lack of agency. However, artists and artisans are crucial to the viability of a creative economy because of their civic engagement. Without the civic engagement of artists and artisans, their creative endeavors and influence are limited to the confines of their studios and their close relationships. When artists and artisans are able to participate in civic engagement, building a relationship with their community, and are encouraged and rewarded for this engagement, the artists and artisans have the potential to transform a place into a vibrant reflection of the kind of world they would like to inhabit, a world that prioritizes social justice, creative expression, and sustainability. This strengthening of a sense of place performs an increase in the quality of life for a community by enabling a core identity to be retained even as regions evolve and change.

Keywords: Participatory Action Research, Asset Based Development, Creative Economy, Community Economy, Diverse Economy, Artists, Artisans, Civic Engagement, Noncapitalist, Sense of Place, Quality of Life, Social Justice, Activism, Creative Expression

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CHAPTER 1

RETHINKING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Introduction

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project utilized a participatory action research methodology with an asset-based approach to examine the noncapitalist practices of artists and artisans in the context of a community economy. By privileging noncapitalist practices, the contributions of artists and artisans can be assigned value, where little or no value was assigned before. These transformed assets enable the emergence of possibilities that can inform how communities explore alternative development practices.

Within mainstream creative economy discourse, the main threads tend to lead towards Richard Florida and his vision of the creative economy where creative capital attracts creative professionals, and what ensues is basically a trickle down theory of creative economies. The well to do will buy fancy food and pay for theater and music tickets, restaurants will need to hire waiters, coffee shops will hire baristas, and the economy of the region improves (Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, 2002).

There is also the idea that the way people spend money will then generate new sectors of manufacturing and design. Daniel Pink posits that in a society where aesthetics are as important, if not more important than utility, then the favored skills in the job market will relate to creative design, creative problem solving, and a need for more artists, programmers, and creative thinkers (Pink, 2006).

And then there is also the idea that a cluster economy model can be transferred into the creative economy sphere where if enough artists, suppliers, venues, galleries, and studios are available, this will attract tourists, will encourage innovation, and the synergy from the cluster will react the same way tech companies do, they will grow bigger, and while some will be consumed, the best will become creative industries that take advantage of efficiency (US Cluster Mapping, 2014).

Often times the foci in mainstream creative economy discourse are focused on generating amenities that will attract people from outside the community who have disposable income, to come, spend their money and leave. Marketing plans are developed that are catered to individuals who earn more than \$70,000 a year, are women, and/or gay men. The idea is that investing in advertising will foster a tourism economy. Alternatively, there can be an attempt to draw bigger businesses to a region by selling the amenities a region has to offer a new influx of workers (Pappas, Fostering the Arts and Culture 5 Hub Marketing Plan, 2010).

To a certain degree, these are all potentially positive actions, however, the focus very rarely impacts the actual artists and artisans of a region. The focus is on providing services for people that are not residents in the community. The local community benefits are incidental to the intended audience. Instead of focusing on local artists and artisans, funding is directed to promote tourism, land and property speculation, tax incentives for manufacturing, large scale marketing initiatives, consultant fees, nonprofit agencies, and advertising campaigns.

In Franklin County Massachusetts there are few resources to enact the kind of creative economy espoused by Florida or Pink. The primary response to attempts at economic development is a long list of deficits. How does one pay for a national scale advertising campaign when there are no funds for a designer, let alone the advertising fees for a national magazine?

The primary way to try to attain the resources needed to participate in the mainstream creative economy development discourse is through the infusion of funding from grants. Often, the pursuit of grants is again a reinforcement of the narrative of deficits with the idea that the community with the least ability to help itself will be awarded with the greatest assistance. Franklin County is often seen as a region in need and lacking economic agency. This lack of agency and a dependence on external assistance is viewed as a helpful narrative when pursuing grants. However, when a community's primary source of funding continues to be need-based grants year after year, to the point that the grants are needed to just maintain operational costs of city services and non-profits agencies, the dependence on external funding performs that reality of a region in need and a lack of agency.

The primary mode community developers, grant writers, and even artists and artisans use when assessing economic success or well being is by looking at the needs and absences of the community. These needs are privileged because they help convey standardized capitalocentric units of measurement and the dominant capitalocentric perspective to granting agencies. Artists and artisans then adopt those same units of measurement and the capitalocentric perspective when they generate their own identities as voiceless victims of the economy. The absences and

needs become amplified and assume monolithic proportions that are very hard, if not impossible to move. The end result is a loss of agency.

The solutions for development of the creative economy, from a needs based perspective, appear to all stem from external sources whether that is from grants, tourism, or industry. While these strategies, can work in some instances, they are not a panacea and often lead to solutions that are disconnected from the lives and practices of regional artists and artisans. The focus on traditional metrics to demonstrate success moves funding away from individuals. Grant resources tend to be channeled in ways that will impact traditional metrics like arts infrastructure, community relations, itineraries and themed month development, website enhancement, media relations, social media campaigns, special events & programs, partnership programs, promotional materials, advertising campaigns, tradeshow and marketplaces, research and assessment. The solutions are valid and important, but again, often disconnected from the experiences of most artists and artisans.

The focus of most economic development grants is growth. If there is growth in any number, that is seen as a success. Therefore, looking change in ticket sales, tax revenue, hotel and lodging statistics, numbers of visitors, income, unemployment, and growth from the previous year allow for easily quantifiable results to be reported back to granting agencies.

So where do we look for alternatives? Stepping away from a purely capitalocentric perspective and one that often promotes the creative economy as a panacea to post-manufacturing economies allows one to explore an economy, as

Julie Graham defined it, a system designed to improve the quality of life for people (Graham, 2008).

Ann Markusen, for example, suggests we move our focus away from export base models and focus more on services for and consumption by local actors (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007). Harry Garnham, when talking about spirit of place, hits on a key concept about the importance of an inclusive model of planning, one that incorporates the people that best know and experience a place. This then becomes a primary reason for looking at a participatory action research methodology where the people who are the subjects of a research project are also the researchers (Garnham, 1985). John Kretuzman and John McKnight utilize Asset Based Community Development to explain how communities can drive their own development processes by utilizing the assets that are already in their communities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Most influential for Rethinking the Creative Economy is how J.K. Gibson-Graham challenge the dominant narrative that capitalism will always overwhelm noncapitalist practices and inevitably create victims of workers and communities. Gibson-Graham explain that what we see and recognize depends on the theoretical choices we make. An individual may only see the capitalist economy when they are in a capitalocentric mindset, however the whole superstructure of a diverse economy, incorporating both the capitalist and community economies, exists simultaneously (Gibson-Graham, 1996).

Gibson-Graham expose the non-capitalist forms of economy and allows one to recognize the myopic perspective of focusing solely on the capitalocentric economy when there is a much larger collection of systems at work below the surface. The capitalist economy is dependent on the community economy and it cannot exist without the accompanying superstructure's support. Highlighting diverse practices provides the opportunity to decenter capitalocentric development methods, making room for community based economic alternatives. Gibson-Graham create a way to see the activity of a diverse economy beyond the capitalist practices by breaking an economy into enterprise, labor, property, transactions, and finance categories and then giving examples of alternative capitalist and non-capitalist practices that already exist alongside the capitalist practices. By recognizing the alternative and non-capitalist activities as incorporated into a more holistic view of an economy Gibson-Graham enables the possibility of understanding an economy that is more inclusive (Gibson-Graham, 1996).

For artists and artisans the translation from broader diverse economy concepts to ones that can be applied in a creative economy context is relatively easy. There is an often a disconnect between the capitalocentric economy that is reported on the television news and national newspapers, and the lived experiences of artists and artisans. And while the dominant social construction of economy focuses artists and artisans on the centrality of the capitalocentric economy, when artists and artisans are able to recognize the existence of a diverse economy, there is a sense of fit, that the more inclusive framework is a more accurate portrayal of their lived economic experience.

In addition to the capitalist practices artists and artisans are engaged in for wage earning, they are also engaged in a wide variety of practices that are for, much of mainstream development, unrecognized. Artists and artisans are engaged in work like helping support social causes, from preserving a covered bridge to engaging in activist actions to prevent the building of a natural gas pipeline; giving donations of art or performance to raise funds for causes or organizations; utilizing formal organized religion to helping maintain a sense of hope and possibility; selling art and crafts through small local art shows and online on sites like Etsy.com; freelance work; non-profit work; work for community and arts organizations, schools, colleges; participating in producer cooperatives; utilizing shared studio spaces; forming informal collectives of artists and artisans working together to take advantage of economies of scale with shared equipment and materials; engaging in under the table work; participating in informal lending where groups collect funds to appropriate collectively; self-provisioning by creating materials, gleaning materials, and growing food; gifting created art and crafts to friends, peers, and organizations; trading with other artists, artisans, farmers, producers, health care providers, restaurants, and landlords; and providing family care for children, parents, relations' families.

By adopting the Gibson-Graham framework to the Creative Economy one can help illustrate examples of work that artists and artisans are engaged in. When artists and artisans are exposed to a diverse economic model where the alternative and non-capitalist practices are valued, then the practices that artists and artisans are already engaged in become valid economic activity. Because artists and artisans

are already involved in that valid economic activity, then they have agency, knowledge, and expertise about what they are engaged in and how to strengthen what they are engaged in. The rethinking of the economy enables agency.

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project utilized the diverse economy frameworks, and the concepts of asset based community development, to learn from the artists and artisans using a participatory action research methodology. There were 24 artist and artisan researchers who committed to two days of training, a follow up meeting, and a debriefing. The researchers were provided with digital recorders and paid \$500.00 and they interviewed approximately 5 artist and artisan peers (some did more, some did fewer). This resulted in 132 interviews from across the region¹.

Despite their differences as individuals, the artist and artisan researchers were able to generate a shared epistemology where they recognized that multiple realities exist simultaneously, a noncapitalist reality as well as capitalocentric reality, needs-based and asset-based worldviews; that knowledge production is always political and researchers have a choice about who or what to strengthen and can decide who generates data; that researchers can make an ethical choice to pursue possibility; that they could become activist researchers reframing assets in a way that gives artists and artisans agency; and that they are participating in a diverse creative community economy rather than capitalocentric creative economy.

Crucial for the artist and artisans was their ability capture a sense of participation in creating their identity. The project did this by empowering the artist and artisan researchers to define who is an artist or artisan and what are valuable

non-capitalist practices; enabling the artists and artisans to generate the data about their own community and participate in the analysis of the data; and helping artists and artisans choose what and how to act upon the research. In this way the research became a collaborative project that we engaged in, rather than a singular project of an individual academic.

The artists are seeking a sense of place that feels welcoming and conducive to a creative life cycle and the pursuit of a quality of life that enables the prioritization of creative expression. They recognize the existence of a lifecycle for creative economies as evolving, unbound by a time scale, and complex in execution. The points of contact between the artists and artisans and the environment are crucial in how the artists and artisan can impact the creative economy lifecycle during times of prosperity and in times of crisis. The artist and artisans have the ability to actively contribute to their communities and the community economy.

As citizens the artists and artisans are engaged and committed contributors. Each individual maintains multiple positions, multiple worldviews, and is experiencing an intersectional existence that can privilege a narrative of empowerment and possibility just as it can privilege a narrative of subjugation and deficits. A narrative of need creates a loss of agency and self worth. When artists and artisans are not valued or under appreciated, they are shifted off to the sidelines and ignored. However, among the diverse range of artists, there is a strong commonality in their desire to help change their communities for the better. They are all engaged in performing alternative realities through activism, teaching, support for local projects, donations to charitable causes, volunteer work, social work, community

building, and writing. These alternate realities enable the artist or artisan to have a relationship with their environment and generate a sense of place where they are valued and have agency.

If we recognize the potential for artists and artisans to contribute to a community's development, what opportunities are there that enable continued accessibility to live and work space? How does one retain innovation, creativity, and diversity? If some aspects of a community are experiencing prosperity while others are experiencing crisis, how can one examine the community with an intersectional lens and locate where there are assets and opportunities?

By working from an asset based perspective a community can move from being a passive victim of change, to becoming an active participant in guiding how change impacts a city, town, or village. If a capitalocentric vision of a successful economy can be decoupled from sense of place and quality of life, then a focus on a community economy can occur where possibility can emerge from endogenous assets and a community can actively choose to fortify a sense of place and bolster the quality of life. All places and communities are in constant change and have the potential to perform all their stages of development simultaneously. It is the alignment of a particular community's reality at a particular place, in a particular point in time, with an individual artist or artisan's developmental perspective in that moment that creates a sense of place and a perceived quality of life. Both the community reality and the individual reality are in turn influenced by and influence the experience of place.

For many of the artists and artisans in the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, starting from a place of successes, strengths, and possibilities, was enough to, at least for a short period, inspire a change in the experienced reality for the individual. It is in this space where rich possibility exists, where artists and artisans are already performing the reality the artists and artisans wish to inhabit. The space is a liminal opening between crisis and opportunity. This is the space in which volunteerism, activism, and civic engagement can happen and where an artist or artisan can be ignored and taken for granted, or embraced and encouraged.

Choosing to adopt an asset based approach that situates primarily in the community economy enables a reconfiguring of standpoint and can generate a sense of possibility where the possibility perhaps always existed, but was not recognized. And once possibility is recognized, agency can be established so that artists and artisans can become actors within that possibility rather than victims.

Franklin County is a truly a dynamic region where the multiple realities are constantly at play and interacting with each other. It is this rich interaction that helps define a sense of place that is conducive to a diverse economy where artists and artisans can secure many of their basic needs while also prioritizing the creative expression in the crafts and art they produce.

When a community can contribute to the rethinking of economy in a way that values the individual artist or artisan, then the artists and artisans and the non-artists and artisans can co-create a diverse economy. The assets of artists and artisans are focused on civic engagement and strengthening the communities they live and work in. It is the qualities of these relationships of artist and artisan to place

that generate an individual's personal histories and then become integrated into the individual's sense of self. When these relationships and personal histories are identified as unique and of value, then the perceived quality of life is raised, which in turn, enables the performative effect of increasing the quality of life. A vibrant creative economy is the product of a community that values and utilizes the assets of artists and artisans so that they are integral to the sense of place.

Delving Deeper

Many of the methodologies used to approach development of the creative economy are based on traditional metrics and need-based approaches that were developed for different sectors in industry (Peters & Fisher, 2002). The traditional metrics often disenfranchise people from the statistics that represent them, and particularly for rural community economy contexts, often have little bearing on people's day-to-day activities, even as the statistics define the possibilities and capacities of artists and artisans. The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project of Greater Franklin County, Massachusetts seeks to validate the diverse economies of artists and artisans using participatory action research and asset-based community development methodologies to create alternative economic narratives, landscapes, and approaches to performing the community economy of artists and artisans through community-produced knowledge. By customizing these methodologies for specific populations, one can better understand the relationship of how various sectors of the economy intersect and impact individuals, and thereby design interventions that are better able to focus efforts to address the possibilities of those

populations, in this case, the artists and artisans in the Pioneer Valley region of Massachusetts.

Franklin County

Franklin County in rural Western Massachusetts is a culturally rich region where artists and artisans contribute to a diverse range of economic activity that is difficult to measure using standard economic metrics and is challenging to address through a dependence on exogenous development efforts. Florida's 3Ts of tolerance, talent, and technology do not transfer wholesale to Franklin County (Florida, Cities and the Creative Class, 2003). There is a traditional parochialism that seems to be a trait of New England identity, where communities privilege one's heritage and are, at least initially, wary of change and difference. This is contrasted with a population that can be socially progressive in particular contexts. This is in part a product of the prevalence of the region's colleges and the community college in particular.

Florida uses educational attainment as a measure for talent, and across the state, and Franklin County is not exception, there are comparatively high levels of educational attainment, with 90 percent of residents age 25 or older holding a high school diploma, compared with 88 percent for Massachusetts and 84 percent for the United States, and 32 percent of residents age 25 or older holding a BA/BS or higher degree, compared with 37 percent for Massachusetts and 27 percent for the United States (Greenfield Community College, 2010). However, Markusen reminds us, "human creativity, conceptually, cannot be conflated with years of schooling. People at all levels of education exercise considerable inventiveness: homecare workers figure out ingenious ways of dealing with testy and disabled clients; people schooled

on the streets orchestrate brilliant petty crimes; repair people and technicians find remarkable ways of fixing machines and improving their design” (Markusen, Artists as Community Developers, 2005). For Markusen, the creativity exhibited by people in all sectors is an ignored asset, even in Florida’s inventory. One can find this present in Franklin County where there is a wealth of knowledge stored in the living and breathing communities.

The technology infrastructure necessary for participation in the contemporary era is lacking in much of Franklin County, with high speed internet available only in select communities and along specific corridors. The lack of high-speed internet infrastructure exacerbates the challenges of rural communities as they try to engage in the kinds of technological evolution in commerce, communication, and community that is occurring in other parts of the state and country. While recent initiatives are working to expand broadband in the region, the development is still slow and piecemeal.

What emerges in Franklin County is a different landscape from Florida’s indexed creative class centers, a different interpretation of how a creative community might embrace the creative economy within their particular environment. To ignore the existing structures, identities, and infrastructure needs would create a mismatch of expectations for residents, or possibly a misfit between the community’s needs and the solutions proposed.

There is a fundamental question about whether the capitalocentric assumption that growth is good for Franklin County is valid. If growth is primarily driven by an exogenous tourist-based economy, and is not sustainable by the

existing diverse endogenous practices in Franklin County, that tourist based economy is much more susceptible to exogenous forces and crises. In 2010, global shifts, massive fluctuations on Wall Street, and a national unemployment rate of near 10 percent opened up uncertainty about what people were willing to spend money on and where they would do so. It is therefore important to recognize the diversity of endeavors and efforts that must be fostered and supported to create a robust and sustainable economy and not focus solely on one that generates unchecked effort in a single sector, or an over reliance on a potentially variable source of income. The economic downturn opened up a broadly recognized opportunity to re-evaluate what the community holds as important and vital and how the community could strengthen and support those aspects with a diverse array of community centered economic practices.

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project seeks to employ an alternative methodology based on recognizing the diverse community economies of artists and artisans, by using participatory action research, and by focusing on asset-based community development to create alternative narratives and landscapes, and generate alternative approaches to strengthening the community economy of artists and artisans.

By using a participatory action methodology in which the artists and artisans are the researchers and knowledge generators, the artist and artisan communities are able to demonstrate how they are actively engaged in all kinds of diverse economic activity that is not measured by standard economic metrics. Economic development models that do not incorporate alternative economic practices tend

not to impact a broad spectrum of the artists and artisans they are purporting to support. By identifying these alternative practices and selecting specific ones to strengthen, a community can create new pathways to developing the creative economy that are more focused on the artists and artisans rather than, or in conjunction with a capitalocentric approach that is more concerned about importing consumers and external factors.

The hope is that this alternative methodology can be applied to a larger, longer-term study and can be transferable to other communities where traditional approaches to developing the creative economy (and possibly other sectors) are addressing only export based segments of the economy. When looking at development from only a needs-based perspective, the data is incomplete and the solutions that emerge are therefore inadequate. A community economy approach seeks to fill the lacuna with a more inclusive vision of economy.

Methodology

Dorothy Henderson helps conceptualize Participatory Action Research as a methodology that emerges out of Paolo Freire's blending of scientific research with education and activism. Participatory Action Research utilizes a collaborative research process that includes participants in the design and execution of the study, gives value to experiential and popular knowledge, focuses on empowerment and power relations, participates in raising the consciousness of all participants, and generates political and social action to change unequal power distributions in society (Henderson, 1995). Participatory Action research seems like an ideal methodology to utilize for a population of artists and artisans that often feels

disempowered and undervalued by assessments of the local economy. By redefining what is economic on the artist and artisans' terms, and by allowing them to place value on their activities, a new kind of economic narrative and economic knowledge making is engendered.

Asset-based Community Development emerges out of the work of John Kretzmann and John McKnight, who present an alternative model for development that forgoes a fixation on needs, and instead focuses on a community's capacities. By mapping the assets of individuals, associations, and institutions, an inventory of possibilities emerges. Utilizing endogenous strengths allows for action and agency, rather than a needs-based assessment that is reliant on exogenous sources of funding or action for solutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). For many of the artists and artisans in the Greater Franklin County, the narrative is so often focused on what people need and the inability of government or communities to meet those needs. This helps produce a sense of inevitable despair and incipient disaster. While asset-based development does not necessarily eliminate all of the perceived and real needs, it does suggest that there are possibilities that can be utilized to improve the quality of life for artists and artisans in the region.

By approaching the creative economy from a Community Economies epistemology the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is able to unsettle the primarily capitalocentric narratives of economy that dominate the creative economy discourse. "Through compiling and speaking in a language of economic diversity, we are working toward destabilizing the economy as it is usually known and performed, and attempting to reveal a space of political decision" (Gibson-Graham,

A Postcapitalist Politics, 2006). It is through this particular epistemology that “space” is created where alternate perceptions, alternate practices, and alternate realities can exist, co-exist with the capitalocentric narrative, and sometimes supplant the capitalocentric narrative. Utilizing a community economies perspective we can also build an ethic that “privileges care of the local community and its environment” (Gibson-Graham, A Postcapitalist Politics, 2006). For artists and artisans, this means privileging the community of creative actors who generate creative output in the form of physical items and performances; privileging the family, friends, neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities that make the artists and artisans’ communities; privileging the physical environment of location that enables a sense of quality of life and balance; and privileging the entire artist and artisan ecosystem of essential and interconnected production and consumption, support and independence, challenge and opportunity.

Using Gibson-Graham’s postcapitalist framework allows people to choose to reconceptualize economy and economic development in a way that is more inclusive of marginalized populations, in this case, the artists and artisans of the region. What the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project has found, in working with community-based researchers, is that the artists and artisans are capable of producing a rich representation of a rural postcapitalist economy, its assets and successes, as well as challenges and complications, that are framed by the artist and artisans’ own conceptualizations of economy and economic success. With the Fostering Art and Culture Project (a network of artists and artisans, cultural and civic organizations, and businesses seeking to strengthen the creative economy

through the dissemination of best practices and fostering collaboration), the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is creating a venue where the research can be shared and disseminated across Franklin County and beyond so that what is initially discounted as anecdotal or fringe data, can be embraced as valid and important knowledge about the region².

This research project explores three main concepts: How can a community shift from a narrative of subjugation to a narrative of empowerment? What alternative realities are generated when the knowledge of artists and artisans are valued? And, what can we learn from the ways artists and artisans participate differently in a diverse economic setting?



Figure 1: Zoe Ma's Studio³

Notes

¹ 60% from Franklin County, Massachusetts, 17% from Hampshire County, and the remainder from other surrounding counties in Western Massachusetts, Southern Vermont, and Southern New Hampshire.

² The Fostering Art and Culture Project (FACP) was formed in 2005 emerging from a study commissioned by Congressman John Olver, in which Mount Auburn Associates identified health, renewable energy, and the creative economy as clusters to pursue in the Northern Tier (the Route 2 corridor along the northern border of Massachusetts). This partnership currently includes area artists, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Shelburne Falls Area Business Association, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, town planners from Montague and Greenfield, RiverCulture, Double Edge Theatre, and Greenfield Community College. The FACP pursued and received initial funding through the Massachusetts Cultural Council's John and Abigail Adams Grant, and subsequently pursued and received funding from federal appropriations through FIPSE and the Department of Transportation, and a subsequent round of the Adams Grant. The author has served as chair of the FACP and currently is a board member.

³ Zoe Ma is a great example of an artist engaged in diverse practices where she co-rents studio space, utilizes found objects in her art when possible, engages in metal recycling, and rents part of her house to tenants.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Economies and Evolution

In recent years, particularly since the publication of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, 2002), but also highlighted in a *Business Week* article, "The Creative Economy" (Coy, 2000), and work in the United Kingdom to map the creative economy (or creative industries) (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001), the creative economy has been viewed variously as a transformation of a traditional economy focused on the production of material goods to a knowledge based economy (Pink, 2006), as an existing but underutilized and under-recognized ground for capitalist intervention (Coy, 2000), and as a panacea-like inspiration for cities in need of revitalization (Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, 2002).

Much of the existing popular and planning literature on the creative economy focuses on size as a means to impress the importance and vitality of the sector. "The UK has the largest creative sector of the European Union. In terms of GDP it is the largest in the world, and according to UNESCO it is, in absolute terms, the most successful exporter of cultural goods and services in the world, ahead of even the US" (British Council, 2011). This is a double-edged sword, where on one hand, a shift in mainstream development and planning to incorporate industries based on

“individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property” (British Council, 2011) and a focus on the quality of life and sense of place in an explicit (rather than an implicit trickle-down effect) is a truly welcome community oriented shift away from focusing purely on large scale manufacturing and big box stores. However, economic developers, town and city planners, artists and artisans, and community members are often disenchanted when efforts to develop the creative economy do not bring about the anticipated revitalization imagined when looking at cities like Santa Fe, New Mexico; Asheville, North Carolina; or within Massachusetts, the Berkshires or Northampton. Even in cities where the creative economy has been successful, there is often the unintended (but perhaps predictable) disenfranchisement of the very people who are most crucial to the endeavor, the artists and artisans. As housing increases in value and cost, artists and artisans are increasingly pushed out of cities they can no longer afford and these cities attain a kind of gated community effect where access to amenities, good schools, and adequately funded public services, are reserved for a specific income bracket.

An inclusive perspective on the creative economy can benefit from an inversion of scale highlighted by Janelle Cornwell, who drew from Sedgwick and Gibson-Graham to highlight the fetishization of equating size to power when critiquing alternative economic practices and thereby rendering alternative economic practices “not only insignificant; [but] bound to be tainted, destroyed, or corrupted by capitalism” (Cornwell, 2011). By disrupting the relationship of global dominance and local submission through what Cornwell calls “epistemic

gymnastics” an individual and local-specific perspective is brought into conversation with a regional, national, or global industry perspective and the implied hierarchy is disrupted. The local can inform the creation of the global, and the local can assume the position of the global. Roles can become reversed, or at least fluid, when prioritizing individuals, local communities, and regions (Cornwell, 2011).

By borrowing from feminist theory, particularly participatory action research, and deepening an understanding of the creative economy from an intersectional perspective, communities may find different priorities and foci, particularly in rural regions. What can then emerge is a more complex understanding of place, one that is informed by multiple narratives, multiple voices, and their fragile interconnected relationships. Yi Fu Tuan defines this awareness as “local patriotism” (Tuan, 1974).

There are two kinds of patriotism, local and imperial. Local patriotism rests on the intimate experience of place, and on a sense of the fragility of goodness: that which we love has no guarantee to endure. Imperial patriotism feeds on collective egotism and pride. (Tuan, 1974)

Tuan unabashedly asks us to embrace the intimate fragility, the temporality of what we value in the local. For the context of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, Tuan asks us to delve deeper than the surface level common responses to economic development and explore the relationship that connects the individual to community and the individual to place, the local patriotism that is more nuanced and more sensual. In contrast, the blunt impact of imperial patriotism’s vision of traditional economic development begins to feel suspect.

By focusing on a local patriotism that “intimate experience of place,” class divides can become permeable by enhancing a shared experience. On the local, community, and individual scale, a vibrant creative economy potentially creates a more vibrant and livable city or region. Access to various forms of art and crafts both on display and for sale from local artists and artisans, goes hand in hand with a vibrant local foods movement in both defining and fortifying a sense of place. An active music, theater, and performance scene creates opportunities for communities to gather and deepen their connections with each other through their shared experiences. A community that seeks shared experiences, places value on the unique expressions of place and time and encourages the continued development of those unique expressions. “Members of the Creative Class thus have an economic interest as well as a moral imperative to reduce class divides, not just through charity or government transfer payments but by tapping the creativity of the many and thus ensuring that all are integrated into the Creative Economy” (Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, 2002). This ethical ecosystem functions most efficiently when it benefits all. It is advantageous for the creative economy to reduce and transcend class divides as it fortifies the local patriotism.

It is, of course tempting to romanticize the creative economy as the panacea for all economically impoverished areas, all socially stratified communities, and all regions that are seeking a unique identity. However, ecosystems are complex and the utopian vision is inspirational, but often misleading. The creative economy, like the capitalist economy, is full of contradictions and complications. The fact that

there are fault lines and fissures in the utopian vision does not mean we should be less forgiving than we are with the faults and fissures of the capitalist economy. However, a rereading of the creative economy as a community economy is alluring for the purposes of this study in that it is a demonstration of an ethical shift that focuses on community defined assets and community defined possibilities rather than universal approaches to economic development. The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is also a model for how to develop a community economy perspective within a specific sector. It is, in a sense, a metaphor for alternate possibilities and knowledge making projects that could be explored in a way that retains a community's specific identity¹.

It has been clear through the economic crises of the last several years and the continued uncertainty of the future, that the potential promises of scale attributed to a global economy are also fraught with the potential for global crises, and that the national and international safeguards are insufficient to protect the needs of local communities. By fostering a diverse array of approaches, and recognizing and promoting value in the individual lived experiences of people, we can try to mitigate an overreliance on one vision of economic success. Gottlieb warns, "Quality of life indices rarely incorporate the value of diversity—as opposed to quantity—of amenities" (Gottlieb, 1994). Rather than the end goal being growth, our end goal should be innovative responses to change that protect our most valuable assets, the quality of life for human and non-human actors in the environment. Assessment within the diverse economy environment is not for use in the positivist science model of creating replicable generalizations, but for clarifying our understanding of

a specific place in a specific point in time. Assessment and evaluation allows us to learn about ourselves and better understand the intersectional nature of the local in relation to the regional, national, and global economies. It is through this understanding that a transformative recognition of relationships can develop into a performative vision, where we enact the world we wish to inhabit, and in doing so, make its existence a reality (Gibson-Graham, *Diverse economies: performative practices for "other worlds"*, 2008).

Cluster Economies

As a creative economy grows a stronger community economy, there are ripples that emanate first with artists and artisans. For example, when synergy among artists enriches the growing hidden technology segment (digital artists and artisans), the collective experience, artistry, craft, and knowledge is deepened and greater possibilities are enabled by their collective abilities and equipment. Similarly, shop owners who display and sell local artist and artisans' work, and restaurants and bars that host events or performances, benefit from increased traffic and alternate clientele that may be different from their usual customer base. Local schools benefit from access to talented writers, musicians, theater troupes, visual artists, etc. that enrich and bring diversity to how one can envision education. The success and exposure of a community to individual artists and artisans inspire others to envision possibility, and eventually, what is performed is a cluster-based economy where a critical mass of talent, production, innovation, and distribution is realized.

Clusters exist where the economic activities in a set of related industries in a given location reach critical mass. It is at this point that local linkages begin

to have a meaningful impact on the performance of companies, and that important opportunities for local collaboration among firms and other organizations in the relevant fields arise. (US Cluster Mapping, 2014)

The primary model of a cluster economy is what appeals to city planners and economic developers. However, tied to the capitalocentric model of a cluster economy is scale, the efficiencies of scale, and the potential for increased profit. When one is able to remove the confining yoke of capitalocentric perspective of growth and success, even small-scale clusters reveal promising synergy.

One of the important components to a cluster economy model is an educational resource, which in Franklin County is Greenfield Community College. Increasingly, as politicians look to the future that our population will inhabit and the skills they will need to possess, the acronym STEM is embraced as a way forward². More recently, the acronym STEAM, for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, is moving to the forefront as both employers and individuals seek and place a higher value on design, creative problem solving, and aesthetics. Without the art in STEAM, the progress and prosperity that is implied in the STEM model is limited³. Even those that find success in the STEM fields may ultimately find that a lack of creative skills limit their abilities to think outside of the preexisting boundaries and stymie the kinds of breakthroughs that revolutionize the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

STEAM represents the economic progress and breakthrough innovation that comes from adding art and design to STEM: STEM+Art=STEAM. The tools and methods of design offer new models for creative problem-solving and interdisciplinary partnership, introducing innovative practices of design thinking into STEM education and research. To realize this potential, scientists, artists, and designers must develop new ways of working together and new modes of research and education. (RISD Office of Government Relations, 2011)

When the arts are allowed to atrophy in an educational system, as they have in many of our public schools, the talent and skills of a whole sector of people are under or unutilized. The restriction of access to the arts to only people who can afford lessons or box office tickets limits the horizon of possibilities not only of individuals, but whole communities and whole economies. The addition of the arts to a STEM vision of the future enables people to see that alternate pathways exist.

A cluster can represent the collective potential of synergistic relationships, from the way education is promoted at all levels, to the collaborations between local business establishments and artists and artisans, suppliers of raw materials for art or craft creation, and among the artists and artisans themselves.

The Local Creative Economy

At its broadest level, imagined through a short wide-angle lens, a definition of the creative economy has the potential to encompass nearly everyone within a community. There are, of course, the artists and artisans, who we can define as visual, performing, and digital artists, potters, handcrafters, woodworkers, fiber artists, graphic and web designers, and artisanal food producers. Florida also includes the creative professionals, people whose fields ask them to think and act creatively and with a high degree of autonomy (Florida, Rise of the Creative Class ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life, 2002). This group would include educators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and many manager/supervisory type positions. There are also the creative professionals who directly support the artists and artisans, gallery and shop owners, performance space schedulers, the support staff for art and culture non-profits, and community

creative economy developers. Service professionals are also crucial to the creative economy and range from staff at bars and restaurants to people who provide the services artists and artisans need to produce their work, whether it is the milling of raw materials, printing or shipping needs, or specialized machine tool work.

One can broaden the focus even further by looking at nearly every person as a consumer with the potential to contribute to the creative economy, either as tourists to a city or region, or as native community members who exercise choice to participate in the creative economy as consumers, students, and audience members. As one continues to examine the broadest definitions of a creative economy it is possible to take the perspective of a regional or national level and participation in a creative economy might include the purchase of music, going to movies, and buying a more aesthetically pleasing product rather than a purely utilitarian product, or as Daniel Pink states, “Mastery of design, empathy, play, and other seemingly ‘soft’ aptitudes is now the main way for individuals and firms to stand out in a crowded marketplace.” Pink posits that we are in a landscape formed by relative abundance for many people, where we are not confined to subsistence living, and often can express this abundance by choosing an aesthetically pleasing toilet brush that is more expensive, instead of the purely utilitarian, and cheaper, toilet brush, even though they perform the same function. This, of course, can be problematized in a myriad of ways from the impact of poverty on choice, to the availability of choice in rural areas. There are, however, for a great many of people in the United States, the potential for aesthetic choices even with the most utilitarian of products (Pink, 2006).

Of course, the wider the field of view gets when we look at an economy, and the more we try to encompass within that field of view, the less resolution we have for all the participants, and eventually the categorization of sectors starts to become meaningless. The creative economy might include computer manufacturing, automobile assembly, specialized farming, and sink manufacturers, etc. Eventually one loses the ability to comprehend the creative economy and its actors, and while creative industries have embedded themselves into many people's day-to-day existence, and that seems to be increasing with Pink's aesthetic choices (particularly with people who have access to money and the internet), when we examine a creative economy at this scale, what typically trickles down to the local rural artist or artisan becomes less and less important. The things that end up getting measured are big box retail sales, manufacturing, and other measures of export base economies.

Ann Markusen, in "A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy" (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007) pushes the reader to move away from an export base theory economy in a rural context, and move towards an endogenous consumption based economy.

Small rural areas have been constrained in their development strategies by the heavy hand of export base theory. Incentives have been focused principally on wooing manufacturing plants, inducing further local processing of resource-based commodities, and attracting tourists. In some places, these efforts have borne fruit, but many others have little to show for them. Unwarranted focus on exports produces lopsided strategies that fail to consider other sources of growth. (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007)

The development strategies Markusen is warning about are strategies that have been utilized elsewhere with success, like the cluster economy model, but the translation to a rural environment, and the potentially dangerous dependence on external forces, can reveal a lack of fit to the model. By focusing instead on the overlooked assets of an endogenous base that is not solely import substitution, but the creation of new goods and services, not solely or primarily for export, but to fill an unmet or unrealized native need, Markusen argues, creates an opportunity to participate in a different kind of consumption pattern.

But suppose that local consumption patterns change in favor of locally produced goods and services, causing an increase in local employment without any augmentation in the economic base. Import substitution theorists always assumed that consumption tastes and preferences were fixed; the strategy sought to replace imports with similar goods and services produced locally. In the cultural sphere, import substitution could be conceptualized as meeting latent demand for new types of goods and services—demand that would be effective if the opportunity to participate were offered. (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007)

Markusen's idea, that an "opportunity to participate," to perform an alternate economic reality, endows people with agency to think and choose for themselves rather than being "fixed" consumers, as they might appear from a large scale, low resolution perspective. An example of successful development of latent demand in Western Massachusetts has been the work of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), which through an educational and marketing campaign, an organizing effort with local farms, grocers, farmers' markets, and restaurants, have transformed the local food movement in Western Massachusetts from a region of unaffiliated farm stands, and low consumer knowledge, to a region where 12.5 percent of the diet is local, with a goal of making local food 25 percent of residents'

diets in twenty years (CISA). CISA is working to reach this goal by educating Pioneer Valley residents to prioritize local food purchasing and substitution of local seasonal foods for imported out of season foods, increasing access to local food, and helping farmers increase production aimed at local consumption (CISA). In this example, CISA has tapped into a latent desire for community members in Western Massachusetts to have access to healthy and local food alternatives. The impact is broad, from specialty mushrooms and meats in local farmers' markets, to cafeteria ingredients at Greenfield Community College, to food pantry services for residents in need in Turners Falls, to SNAP (food stamp) eligible purchases.

Markusen also highlights the importance of non-wage income (retirees' spending) and amenities in creating a sense of place, of community culture, and their role in developing local consumption based economic development.

Acknowledging that non-wage income matters, that amenities help to attract retirees as well as tourists, and that tastes and preferences can be shaped by community culture and offerings, opens the possibilities for new local consumption-based types of economic development activity beyond the attempt to attract businesses that export goods and services elsewhere. The rural landscape is littered with costly public investment in business and industrial parks that remain underutilized or vacant. Rural development vision is continually constrained by looking only through the export base lens. (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007)

What the local consumption economy offers, is an investment scheme in assets that the local community utilizes and values, or grows to value. The goods and services are delivered by and to, primarily, local people. The earnings generated by local people are then cycled back into the local economy (rather than shareholders or raw materials suppliers) at a much greater rate than manufacturing or the sale of exogenously manufactured goods. By creating a sense of place with value,

communities can retain citizens, like retirees who contribute non-wage income into the community, and serve the people who already live in and benefit from a local economy. By focusing on people rather than profits, public investment can be made in sustaining a local identity instead of pursuing a model ill suited to the rural landscape.

Markusen makes central the impact of art and culture on the population in what she calls “non-economic ways” (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007). These additional multiplier effects are not minor and are stimulating (ultimately) to Markusen’s consumer base economy and her economic ways.

Such cultural spaces and programming contribute to community welfare in many non-economic ways as well—broadening horizons, addressing difficult community issues through artistic expression, offering the artistically inclined an outlet for their talents and desires, integrating newcomers with existing community members, and adding humor and camaraderie to community life.

Many rural communities [...] have invested in new cultural spaces as a way of revitalizing small town centers and inducing local consumption activities that draw people together and make the community a more attractive place to live and do business. Eventually, some succeed in attracting a modest tourist trade, although generally not until local residents have embraced the new activities and patronize them continually. Even then, many “tourists” are residents of surrounding counties within an hour’s drive. Nevertheless, they succeed in capturing consumption dollars that otherwise would have drained out of the region. (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007)

Markusen highlights a perhaps imperceptible difference, for a mainstream economic developer, but a fundamental difference for the artists and artisans that the main focus of the rural creative economy is for local consumption. There an added benefit from tourism, and everything that contributes to the local economy is welcome, but

the primary consumers and utilizers of cultural spaces and markets are the local residents. Cultural spaces and programming contribute new ways to envision a quality of life. They are utilizing art and culture as a means to move away from a lack of agency, to an opening of possibilities.

Markusen relates that moving from an export based economy focused on attracting big business and manufacturing, to a local consumption based economy, is not an easy transition for many communities that are slow to recognize the artists and artisans within their community and are wary about attracting others. However, artists and artisans are central to the endeavor and the real economic impact in both the traditional sense and the community economy sense, is realized when these artists are welcomed and integrated into the community as residents.



Figure 2: Kim Parkhurst⁴

Artists and artisans, like manufacturers seeking a location to build a factory, or a big box store looking to enter a new market, are mobile. Artists and artisans tend to be self-employed and have a greater degree of flexibility to choose the environment they want to live in. While younger artists may prefer living in urban areas, older more established artists migrate out of the cities and seek places where they can prioritize and attain different qualities (cost of living, space, etc.) than the urban population.

Artists are important as rural residents, exporters of their work to other regions (thereby bringing income into the community that is spent in part locally), and catalysts for community arts activities.

Artists are an unusual occupational group in that they have very high rates of self-employment. Nationally, 39 percent of musicians, 50 percent of visual artists, and 68 percent of writers are self-employed, compared with 8 percent of all Americans in the labor force. In rural areas, the rate is even higher. Because of this, artists are relatively footloose and can choose where they wish to live and work. (Markusen, *A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy*, 2007)

Markusen's study reveals trends within Minnesota where there is a loss of population for young artists who leave rural areas for the Twin Cities, but an inward migration from the cities to rural areas once artists are older and have established themselves and are mid- to late career. There are opportunities for communities to purposefully ferment (as they do with manufacturing and retail) the kinds of communities that attract both the established older artists, and incubate the younger generations of artists.

Creating an endogenously focused consumer base model of the creative economy, Markusen helps gift value onto the artists and artisans who are typically marginalized or ignored during efforts to attract industry or large business. She is

performing the reality of her research by demonstrating a different economic model that is at play at multiple scales, but is particularly effective for rural communities where the investment into a specialized industry targeting an export base economy model puts the community in too much risk from competition, technological shifts, lower wage workers, and the pursuit of profits, while generating a lower community benefit in local spending and place making, where profits are garnered exogenously, wages earned are spent on amenities generated exogenously, and exogenous forces dictate employment and production. Markusen refocuses the economy on the local individuals, the retirees, the mid to late career artists, and rather than ignore them, focuses on the possibility the native populations engender.

An emphasis on artists as key actors and catalysts in rural areas reflects a new emphasis on occupational targeting in economic development practice. (Markusen, A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy, 2007)

Artists as catalysts, Markusen emphasizes, must be focused on as an intentional development practice just as economic developers campaign to recruit a manufacturing firm. However, where the lack of infrastructure or dilapidated condition of buildings, might be inhibitors for large manufacturing, they can be assets for an artist or artisan community. The incentives, as with manufacturing, are to attract new community members who will contribute to improving the quality of life for all residents.

[...T]he proliferation of small communities that are pinning their hopes on new cultural investments for a largely local consumer base suggests that disappointing results with industrial recruitment are driving them to innovate in a surprising new direction. (Markusen, A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy, 2007)

Markusen's insights are not fundamentally opposed to Richard Florida's study of, primarily, urban creative centers, but while Florida remains largely tied to an export base theory, Markusen shows how a reconceptualization from an export base theory to a consumer base theory can alter how a community approaches economic development. Additionally, by focusing primarily on strengthening local spending on locally produced goods and services, the multiplier effects are greater than what is attained when goods and services, even arts and culture, are exogenously developed and situated. Markusen is focused on Main Street and downtown, not the stadium by the highway. Her primary audience is local for locally generated amenities.

For the purposes of this study, the focus is situated primarily on the local creative economy. Purchasing a bag of Doritos may distantly help corn farmers, but the corn industry as a whole is not as informative for our purposes as looking at the disaggregated impact of sweet corn sales by local farmers at farmers markets, farm stands, and local groceries. Narrowing the focus further, this study is primarily looking at the impact and activity of the individual farmers, or in this case, the individual artists and artisans who are often viewed only through their product or their income generation.

Development in the local creative economy is often focused primarily on the consumer, with the goal to attract more customers (usually focused on tourists) to purchase food, art, crafts, products, and thereby increase tax revenue, and as a byproduct increase the quality of life for people who are native to the city or region. Tourism is seen as a clean fuel additive to the economy. There are relatively few

added strains to social services, and yet tourist money spent in a region has the potential to stay in the region. For this reason, tourism is the primary partner in many creative economy development plans. In the utopian vision of a tourist driven creative economy, non-native consumers who have incomes higher than \$75,000 a year are drawn to a region to visit for more than one day. They stay in a locally owned bed and breakfast, eat meals at locally owned restaurants, visit local cultural venues and festivals, purchase art and crafts from local artists, and at the end of their vacation, they go home. Hopefully, the tourist then incorporates his or her experience into a tradition that becomes a kind of seasonal pilgrimage, one that grows to include loved ones, friends, and co-workers.

The reality that tempers a utopian vision of a creative economy supported by tourism is that yes, there are some successful events and venues that consistently draw consumers from outside the region, however, it can be challenging to expand a non-native individual's repertoire beyond what is familiar, whether that is eating at a chain restaurant, staying at a nationally branded hotel, or shopping at big box stores. Additionally, building an economy that is dependent on tourism leaves a native community susceptible to exogenous pressures, whether that is higher fuel prices, increased homeland security measures, or shifts in the broad economy that alter travel patterns. Of course, any exogenous funding that enters into a community through tourism is welcome and valued, however, building an economic model that is dependent on that source, and sometimes is catered to that source, is potentially dangerous for local businesses and artists and has a potential to homogenize a local sense of place into something that is deemed more palatable to the target clientele.

Ultimately, this is not beneficial to local artists and artisans who become tied into business models where tourism income can ensure success or failure, and/or the degeneration of creativity ultimately reducing variety and diversity until one tourist destination becomes synonymous with any number of other destinations, reducing the impetus for tourists to visit in the first place.

When we change the lens with which we view the creative economy from a wide-angle lens looking at national and regional trends, to a close range microscopic, local and individual lens, we can focus on the artists and artisans. Ironically, the artists and artisans are the first people the general public thinks about when the creative economy is mentioned, however very few economic development models focus on the artists and artisans, and for those that do, the impact on artists and artisans is severely muted by the time it reaches the level of the individual. Often, what ends up happening is akin to the 2008 President Bush era economic rescue package costing \$168 billion dollars, which is a tremendous amount of money and garners feelings of generosity, even though the real impact for the individual ranged from \$300 to \$600 (Williams, 2008), and generated very little actual economic impact (Zerwitz). Instead, by looking at individual artists and artisans, the resources they are utilizing and generating, and how those actions impact the native community and the authentic sense of place for the city, town, village, or region, we can then begin to address what a different kind of development might look like.

An exploration of a diverse creative community economy allows for the focus to remain on improving the quality of life and environment for specific people and

specific places. While one component of that is the traditional capitalist infrastructure, it does not obscure the non-capitalist practices that are as important, if not more important to the individual artists and artisans, and the native community members who support and benefit from these non- or alternative capitalist practices.

Sense of Place

For artists and artisans, the village, town, city, or region's sense of place is a crucial component of how they construct a viable community economy. Each artist or artisan constructs their own worldview or standpoint through the collective experiences that have brought the person to where they are now. These experiences allow for a performed landscape as a result of the relationships an individual has with place. It is these relationships with place that ultimately create a unique sense of place that allows for the kinds of priorities that are important for the artist or artisan.

A sense of place is not a static universal thing. Individuals, and sometimes a collective of individuals define a sense of place. The individuals perform the sense of place as their reality, their worldview that they are experiencing as a lived experience.

Each person brings his or her own personality, background, and previous experiences into the process of forming a sense of place. People draw on their own use of the human senses, their own sense of aesthetics, and their own intellectual and emotional responses that they have developed with regard to places; these are based on their experiences and perceptions and the development of cognitive understandings of places. (Wilkie & Roberson, Sense of Place, 2010)

Because of the individual nature of sense of place, places evolve as a person ages and gains different experience. For the artists and artisans who left Franklin County, Massachusetts and returned, there is a new recognition of things of value that were experienced in the past and that creates a rationale for the importance of returning in order to refill a memory of something that existed in the past. Similarly, for people who have immigrated to Franklin County and stayed, they have found something they were seeking.

Some wanderers and adventurers spend a lifetime exploring the world piecing together a worldview out of the unique mosaic of places that exist—each with different combinations of climate, ecology and landforms, and each with a unique mix of cultures, built environments and organization of cultural landscapes. And of course, humans all respond to places differently through our senses [...]. (Wilkie, "Sense of Place" and Selected Conceptual Approaches to Place, 2003)

Therefore, a person's synthesis of sense of place is not solely an internal independent process, but a process that incorporates aspects of the environment and community, and how the environment and community impact influence the individual. Wilkie writes, "[...] place has been used to denote bounded spaces where human identity and social interaction come together with memories and meaning" (Wilkie, "Sense of Place" and Selected Conceptual Approaches to Place, 2003). It is these bounded spaces that allow an individual to recognize and identify a location with unique experiences that are endemic to that place.

Similarly, Garnham creates a framework for his "spirit of place" utilizing the natural environment, cultural expression, and sensory experience as the primary elements to creating a unique sense of place.

The ingredients which produce these attributes are based upon: (1) Aspects of the existing natural environment such as land form and topography,

vegetation, climate, and the presence of water; (2) cultural expressions such as bridges, forts, or hilltop churches which are a reaction to landscape, social history, physical location, human activities, and place as a cultural artifact (a place's meaning beyond its physical expression such as Yorktown, Virginia, due to its historical significance); and (3) the sensory experience, primarily visual, which result from the interaction of culture with the existing landscape. The holistic interaction of the ingredients which produce a place's attributes are frequently not understood by the local population until they have been unalterably lost; and are, therefore, very vulnerable to unplanned change. (Garnham, 1985)

Garnham stresses that a community's spirit of place can be a unique artifact that is a byproduct of a fragile ecosystem that is in constant change.

I soon began to realize that this was the natural order of things. I realized that change placed new demands upon places, that they could not remain constant in form or function; but as artifacts they had to change to serve new needs. (Garnham, 1985)

This fragility then causes a dilemma. A spirit of place is engendered by a location's uniqueness in a certain point in time and how an individual interfaces with that uniqueness, however, the location (and the individual as Wilkie points out) is always in constant change and the spirit of place generated for one individual in a location in one point in time, may only be retained in the individual's personal history.

It is through this experience of spirit of place that an individual begins to form their own landscape in which they can choose to situate themselves. This performing of landscape is co-created, first by the individual, and then the individual's interaction with the natural and human constructed environment. In this way, other individuals also play into the construct of an individual's landscape. And it is in this co-creation where the fragility of a spirit of place lies. Garnham draws on Norberg-Schulz to illustrate this.

“[...] Since remote times man has recognized that different places have a different character. This character is often so strong that it, in fact, determines the basic properties of the environmental images of most people present, making them feel that they experience and belong to the same place.” When these images are altered, destroyed, or otherwise removed from people’s daily lives the essential bond between person and place can be broken, with a subsequent tangible loss in the basic quality of life. (Garnham, 1985)

The central question for Garnham is, how can a community actively choose to retain “that town quality and spirit of place” while experiencing change? In order to choose to retain core elements of uniqueness, the elements of uniqueness need to be identified.

I soon realized that without active participation from a place’s people, and an understanding of their needs, no effort toward planned change and preservation of character would be successful. (Garnham, 1985)

Similarly, when one looks at a community economy, the diverse components are dependent upon the actors within that community. While there may be similar or comparable elements from community to community, each of these elements is also intrinsically unique to a particular location, and a particular community. Weber reminds us:

People’s real life experiences have never fit neatly into the boundaries created by academic disciplines: Lives are much more complex and far reaching. Just as the social, political, economic, and psychological dimensions of everyday life are intertwined and mutually dependent, so too are the systems of inequality—race, class, gender, and sexuality—that limit and restrict some people while privileging others. (Weber, 1998)

The human complexity is not a simple thing to unravel and reveal a path towards change or controlled development. The voices one chooses to identify character and spirit of place are crucial to the endeavor. Otherwise, one risks alienating or silencing one group for the benefit of another. This ethical action steers the Rethinking the

Creative Economy Project to the participatory action research methodology as a means to increase, though admittedly not infallibly complete, an intersectionality by hearing from multiple standpoints within the creative economy, learning what count as a community's assets, and exploring what are the elements that create a spirit of place.

For Cross, sense of place is conceptually structured by people's "relationships to place and community attachments" (Cross, 2001). Each response to place is a factor of relationships, which Cross attempts to separate, which in turn paradoxically highlights the integration of place with community.

In separating the ideas of relationships to place and community attachments, my intention was to highlight the complexity of our sense of place. Although every place has its own influence on how we relate to it, I think it is also important to remember how our relationships with and attachments to places are necessarily relational. How I feel in one place is influenced by the positive and negative feelings I have for other places. (Cross, 2001)

The artists and artisans often express a sense of place in relationship to other experiences with place, like relating their experience living in New York City, or a different region of the country, with living in Western Massachusetts. People miss the changing of the seasons, or discover the Chesterfield Gorge and build an appreciation for place as a location. But then it is the relationships to the community that fill in a one-dimensional tourist's perspective and allow access to a broader and more comprehensive sense of place.

Similarly, sense of place as a negative is not only a function of location and environment, but how an individual's relationships with the community fosters a sense of belonging or "rootedness," or whether a lack of options or opportunities create a sense of "place alienation" (Cross, 2001). In the context of the creative

economy, deconstructing sense of place allows for avenues of intervention or asset development. A region can actively choose to strengthen aspects of place and community in ways that allow for or encourage synergistic relationships to develop.

The relationship of a sense of place to a quality of life enables value to be bestowed upon a sense of place's role in a vibrant creative economy. Specifically, how do the unique aspects of a particular place evolve, but not get lost? And how do those unique aspects strengthen the relationships people have to place and community? Garnham referencing Norberg-Schulz and Dubos warn:

“Conclusive ...evidence has been developed during the past five years that quality of life is not a frill but is one of the essential competitive resources to be managed by communities for their own economic well being [...].”
(Garnham, 1985)

As a community economy development tool, sense of place is crucial. A vibrant relationship with place and community will also reinforce a vibrant relationship with the community economy and vice versa. And for the majority of our artists and artisans, a vibrant community economy is crucial for their sustainability as creative actors.

Diverse Economies

In order to clearly understand the scope of the research problem, the Rethinking the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is specifically interested in how capitalocentric development practices can be disrupted in the narrative of the creative economy. By problematizing capitalocentrism, a space is created where one can explore economic diversity. Finally, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project examines how a diverse economy framework can create the possibility for new subject positions and alter existing community narratives.

Rausch and Negrey argue that a community's culture is somewhat fixed and that a creative economy approach is not necessarily transformative, but merely an embellishment that may not pay off in economic health. They continue to qualify that, "Creativity is hard to orchestrate, creativity is hard to commercialize, the existing power structure is difficult to modify, and changing culture, especially in the short run, is no easy task." Taking into account Rausch and Negrey's analysis, it is even more important to work with existing assets, develop opportunities where possible, and not manufacture non-existent characteristics in an attempt to recreate an idealized or stylized vision of a creative center. For Rausch and Negrey the "existing power structure" is a formidable obstacle. Similarly, for the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, the capitalocentric environment, at least initially, appears to be entrenched and formidable (Rausch & Negrey, 2006).

In order to foreground diverse economic practices, it is helpful to draw from the work of Gibson-Graham to move past a vision of a monolithic capitalist economy. Gibson-Graham presents a feminist critique of political economy with the aim of stripping capitalism of its hegemonic power. They argue the very way researchers and activists conceptualize capitalism gives it power:

Representations of capitalism are a potent constituent of the anticapitalist imagination...For this reason, depictions of "capitalist hegemony" deserve a particularly skeptical reading. For in the vicinity of these representations, the very idea of a noncapitalist economy takes the shape of an unlikelihood or even an impossibility.... In this sense, "capitalist hegemony" operates not only as a constituent of, but also as a brake upon, the anticapitalist imagination. (Gibson-Graham, 1996)

Gibson-Graham use an overdetermined approach to demonstrate how capitalism is not the center of economic life, and in so doing they release the brakes on the

anticapitalist imagination. Citing the work of feminist economists, they argue that capitalism is not the most prevalent form of the labor relationship. Resnick and Wolf define capitalism as a class process in which the surplus is appropriated from workers by the firm owners in exchange for a wage (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). This definition of capitalism strips it of a status as a system, in contrast locating it as a particular form of labor relationship that can be observed at the level of individual firms or households. Gibson-Graham put this definition of capitalism in conversation with Ironmonger who argues unpaid labor is the numerically dominant form of labor (Gibson-Graham, 1996). In this way, the dominance of capitalism is revealed as a hollow truth, maintained by homogenous capitalocentric renderings of the economy.

Capitalocentric readings enable economic discourse to center around capitalism and become hegemonic in a way “...that other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism” (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Because non-capitalist practices are viewed as non-economic and therefore not valued, they are subsumed by, contained by, co-opted by, abused by, or contaminated with capitalism:

...the standardized and dominant globalization script constitutes noncapitalist economic relations as inevitably and only ever sites of potential invasion/envelopment/accumulation, sites that may be recalcitrant but are incapable of retaliation, sites in which cooperation in the act of rape [capitalism’s penetration of non-capitalist spaces] is called for and ultimately obtained. For the left the question is how might we challenge the dominant script of globalization and the victim role that is ascribed to workers and community in both “first” and “third” worlds? (Gibson-Graham, 1996)

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project seeks to challenge the “dominant script” for economic development in relation to the creative economy.

The creative economy is often seen as a panacea for all communities. It is a success story that people would like to replicate in all areas of the nation. Every community wishes to be hip and diverse, to have wonderful coffee shops and great used bookstores. To generalize an economic development technique or approach, while ignoring the local culture, strengths, assets, and practices opens up the potential for, at the very least, a mismatch between objectives and the environment, and at its worst, commits violence (Gibson-Graham's "act of rape⁵") upon the very population one is hoping to help transform.

In a 2001 lecture to the Community Economies Collective, Julie Graham described the diverse economy as embodied in Ken Byrne's illustration of an iceberg, Figure 3 (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006).



Figure 3: Diverse Economy Iceberg

The section of iceberg that rises above the water is visible and therefore tangible. In the economy, this is the capitalist wage-labor economy. The diverse economy

encompasses all of the activities held within the upper (therefore visible) and lower (below the waterline and not visible) sections of the economy. The community economy is often hidden below the water but, like an iceberg, is often far more massive in scope and size than the visible capitalist economy. What we see and recognize depends on the theoretical choices we make. While an individual may only see the capitalist economy, the whole superstructure of a diverse economy, incorporating both the capitalist and community economies, exists simultaneously, and regardless of whether one can see it or not, or theorize its existence or importance, it does exist.

Table 1: Diverse Economy Framework⁶

ENTERPRISE	LABOR	PROPERTY	TRANSACTIONS	FINANCE
CAPITALIST Family firm Private unincorporated firm Public Company Multinational	WAGE Salaried Unionized Non-union Part-time Contingent	PRIVATE Individually owned Collectively owned	MARKET Free Naturally protected Artificially protected Monopolized Regulated Niche	MAINSTREAM MARKET Private banks Insurance firms Financial Services Derivatives
ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State Owned Environmentally responsible Socially responsible Non-profit	ALTERNATIVE PAID Self-employed Co-operative Indentured Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE State-owned Customary (clan) land Community land trusts Indigenous knowledge	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Fair and direct trade Alternative currencies Underground market Barter Co-operative exchange Community supported agriculture, fishing, etc.	ALTERNATIVE MARKET State banks Cooperative banks Credit unions Govt. supported lending Community based financial institutions Micro-finance Loan sharks
NON-CAPITALIST Worker cooperatives Sole proprietorships Community enterprise	UNPAID Housework Family care Volunteer Neighborhood work Self-provisioning	OPEN ACCESS Atmosphere Water Open ocean Ecosystem services Outer space	NON-MARKET Household sharing Gift giving State allocations/appropriations Hunting, fishing Gleaning, gathering Sacrifice	NON-MARKET Sweat equity Rotating credit funds Family lending Donations Interest free loans

Feudal enterprise Slave enterprise	Slave labor		Theft, piracy, poaching	Community supported business
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Gibson-Graham's diverse economy framework, Table 1, provides a way to identify a range of activities from a capitalocentric perspective, through an alternative vision of capitalism, to non-capitalist practices (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006). Using the framework to explore the heterogeneity of an economy helps one recognize the narrow perspective that focuses only on the top part of the iceberg.

My interpretation of the iceberg metaphor is that the prominence of the capitalist economy is dependent on the community economy and that it could not maintain its visibility without the accompanying buoyancy of the submerged (and therefore often unnoticed) community economy. I like to imagine that we are swimming in this very cold ocean, and even as our heads are above the water and fixed on the capitalist economy, our bodies are entirely submerged in the community economy. To not recognize the scale and scope of the community economy is to risk, extending the metaphor, a tragedy of Titanic proportions because a focus that is only on the capitalocentric economy neglects the whole noncapitalist and alternative capitalist economies. The damage that could occur to the noncapitalist and alternative capitalist economies through neglect, willful or otherwise, could have a correspondingly large impact on the broader endeavor of an economy as a whole.

The capitalist economy is dependent on the community economy and that it cannot exist without the accompanying superstructure's support. The community economy is recognized as an asset, often subconsciously or implicitly (rather than

consciously or explicitly), by many in Franklin County who purposefully choose to live in the region in order to balance quality of life goals with potentially fewer or lower paying sources of income from capitalist exchange.

In traditional terms, Franklin County is often described as a place of deep poverty, a lack of opportunity, and an area with many social problems. However, for residents engaged in an alternate practice, their perception of reality is different.

I don't really feel like [Franklin County] is [impoverished]. I don't feel the people around here are bursting at the seams with all kinds of money, but I do not feel like this is an impoverished area because I don't think that I am unique in the sense that I grow my own food and I barter and trade for things and I save scraps of material for projects and things, and I think that this region is very rich with resources and resourceful people. They do anything and everything they can to live very fulfilled lives even if it is not monetary fulfillment. (Karen Ducey, Interviewee)

As Ducey relates, participating in a community economy that includes self provisioning, barter and trade, repurposing, and perhaps most importantly, belonging to a community that is also engaged in these practices and values these practices, enables Ducey to feel she is participating in a valid and real economy.

Segedy also finds comfort in the sense of community when he draws on Thomas Daniels' perspective of the value inherent in small towns, "The small town provides 'traditional values of the importance of family and community, offering the potential to balance work, family, and community'." Segedy is highlighting a small town's ability to offset a capitalocentric reading of existence with one that prioritizes a balance of "work, family, and community," or at least places it on as valid a footing as mainstream assessments of assets such as economies of scale, profitability, and growth (Segedy, 1997). The way many people define well-being, quality of life, or health, are often outside of the mainstream units of measurements.

Following that vein of thought, Mellander and Florida suggest looking outside of standard educational indicators for a community's health, "The conventional measure of human capital is based on educational attainment, usually the share of a population with a bachelor's degree and above. More recent research suggests it is more important to measure what people do than what they study, and so occupationally-based measures, associated with knowledge-based or creative occupations have been introduced" (Mellander & Florida, 2006). There is a potentially finer toothed comb utilized when one asks what do people do, rather than what they have studied. How do people utilize skills and knowledge, both the formal education and work skills, but also the kinds of skills and knowledge that are acquired through community learning and experience? Here the quantitative begins to become qualitative as the stories emerge and one asks and learns about people's lived experiences. The data begins to take on a diverse epistemology that matches the diversity of people's experiences with the economy.

Decentering the Dominant Narrative

One aim of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is to highlight existing but unrecognized or invalidated economic practices. Bringing these practices into the foreground allows them to become visible to the community which allows for the opportunity to shift economic subjectivity and put these practices on the radar to be supported by development efforts. Gibson-Graham introduced weak theory as a way to "work against mastery, melancholia, and moralism," enabling them to ask, "What if we asked theory to do something else—to help us see openings, to help us find happiness, to provide a space of freedom and

possibility?” Weak theory allows the researchers to level the hierarchical landscape and emphasize possibility over dominance, multiple narratives over singular legitimacy, and a willingness to become “communal subjects” rather than isolated individuals (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006).

Highlighting diverse practices also provides the opportunity to decenter capitalocentric development practices, making room for community based economic alternatives. So in this endeavor the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project draws on weak theory to assist in the practices of decentering, deconstructing, and difference. However that does not inoculate one from recognizing that there are imbalances in power distribution. There are ingrained inequities that have real consequences for groups and individuals. Hill-Collins highlights several problems associated with a poststructural analysis that is purposefully divorced from an understanding of power relationship and hierarchies:

I remain skeptical of any analysis that decouples difference from its moorings in hierarchical power relations. Doing so allows socially constructed differences emerging from historical patterns of oppression to be submerged within a host of more trivial “differences.” (Hill-Collins, 1998)

Putting Hill-Collins in conversation with insight from Actor Network Theory, Latour argues we live in a socially constructed world but that competing constructions do not simply collapse into relativism because some understandings of the world, have more believers or more power than others (Latour, 1991). In the context of Franklin County, it is possible both to challenge social constructions and hold in mind the power that adheres differentially across and between constructions. Instead of

ignoring one reality for an alternate one, we recognize that both (or more) can exist simultaneously.

The Project is also inspired by the ontological politics a social constructionist understanding of the world makes possible. As Mol argues, within the actor network literature, construction is viewed as the end result of the processes through which facts are created; contested versions or understandings of a phenomena solidify into facts/objects when scientists garner the support to lock these definitions in place, resulting in “perspectival closure.” Mol takes it a step further, arguing objects are continually enacted. Rather than a contested past leading to a singular fixed object (construction), enactment speaks to the continual process of bringing objects into being, that closure is never complete or uncontestable. Social construction arguments challenge the view of a linear, inevitable unfolding of the world, and enactment challenges the permanence of fixed structures created through social processes (Mol, 1999). Mol harkens back to the continual evolving relationship of the individual to location in a sense of place.

Magubana problematizes a poststructural analysis that does not take into account the construction of narrative, arguing de-historicized, decontextualized analyses can reify the very categories authors seek to deconstruct. Exploring conceptions of Black women in colonial discourse she argues we have to look to social relations to understand how theories of race evolved, recognizing there was not a uniform “blackness” and any attempt to analyze theories of race at the turn of the century as uniform reifies the biological essentialism poststructural analysis aims to deconstruct. To avoid this, she argues poststructural analysis should include

the historical contexts of the analysis and that researchers should map the multiple ideologies that arise simultaneously from multiple social locations. Magubana's cautions are important, but like other social constructs, must be considered simultaneously with alternative readings and discourses. Just as there is a danger of unintentionally reifying existing inequities when one ignores a historical context, so too can one reduce the perceived avenues of possibility (Magubana, 2001). An intersectional poststructural perspective can allow one to look at a moment in time from multiple sightlines including the historical contexts, the social constructs, the capitalocentric units of measurement, but also explore alternative visions of possibility, different social constructions, and new units of value. However, by its nature, by utilizing an intersectional perspective, one can recognize that other alternative perspectives exist that may not be accessed by a particular model or study.

By recognizing the capitalocentric readings of economy in Franklin County the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project can help ground and contextualize the development discourse and explore the etymology of regional development policies and practices. It is also possible to trace how capitalocentric readings can play with, contextualize, or even at times strengthen the non-capitalist activities that seem, initially, in opposition to the capitalocentric narrative.

Gibson-Graham gives an example of how to contextualize community economic practices by matching the broader capitalocentric discourse in conversation with development practices in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, Australia and the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist*

Politics, 2006). Magubana also urges the exploration of how understandings vary by social location within a locality. Bringing this insight to the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, by deconstructing the dominant narratives of development and exploring how they compare to the understanding of regional development gathered from participatory action research new more inclusive narratives can be constructed. So, the end result is not just mapping existing diverse economic practices, but also teasing out multiple understandings of the “dominant” development discourse.

Participatory Action Research

In “The Greater Good,” Arundhati Roy urges us to move beyond the gigantism of the 20th Century that diminished the humanity of our actions, and instead to look at the small.

Who knows, perhaps that's what the twenty-first century has in store for us. The dismantling of the Big. Big bombs, big dams, big ideologies, big contradictions, big countries, big wars, big heroes, big mistakes. Perhaps it will be the Century of the Small. Perhaps right now, this very minute, there's a small god up in heaven readying herself for us. (Roy, 1999)

Participatory action research is a transformative practice in which all participants are engaged in a process of teaching and learning about what is valued in the region and how people at the local level can participate in strengthening and preserving those assets. Rather than trying to utilize a template for success developed in other regions, the data collected in a participatory action research project is analyzed by a research collaborative of project coordinators and community researchers, creating both quantitative and descriptive statistics and open-ended qualitative approaches to answers, coding, and analysis.

By utilizing information gathered by community researchers it is possible to create a descriptive framework of tactics that are currently being utilized, and then to select promising tactics that could be strengthened utilizing the region's existing assets in sustainable and environmentally conscious ways; that increase the contributions of individuals, groups, and organizations to the sense of place; and that assist in the rewriting of the community narrative by broadening possibility and agency so that economic endeavors can be enacted across multiple sectors utilizing endogenous and exogenous practices that embrace a diverse economic perspective.

One of the critiques of participatory action research is the issue of scale. By design, the findings and analysis of participatory action research are not meant to be utilized as a universal truth outside of a specific location fixed in a point in time. The methodology can be adapted for different specific locations and different specific populations. The participants, researchers and subjects, are finite and are not a statistical cross section of society. Instead of succumbing to the limitations of participatory action research, it is possible to follow Reid and Frisby's assertion, "We envision that each new attempt can open up new possibilities for engaging in more reflexive, collaborative, and transformative FPAR [Feminist Participatory Action Research]" (Reid & Frisby, 2008). What participatory action research enables is a more detailed perspective on people and practices. Participatory action research enables stories to emerge from data and has the potential to transform interviewees, researchers, and communities. However, Reid and Frisby warn against idealizing feminist participatory action research as inherently pure or

transformative. Utilizing indigenous knowledge or truths is not a transformative experience in itself, rather, it is through the reframing, and the rethinking of possibility that allows for transformation, and therein lies the role of the participatory action researcher. How does one furrow the earth in a way that makes it fertile for transformation? And, how does one do that in a way that respects the local history and social structures even as it disrupts it?

Reid and Frisby echo Mohanty's warning about slipping into real or perceived universal constructs about patriarchy and gender utilizing Western standards when situating non-Western women. But we can also extrapolate a similar faulty construction when trying to situate artists and artisans within a capitalocentric landscape (Reid & Frisby, 2008).

Mohanty argues that patriarchy and gender should not be treated as universal constructs and judged by Western standards, because such analyses often situate non-Western women as inferior powerless victims who lack agency to interpret, resist, and subvert the contexts shaping their lives in different ways (Mohanty, 1984).

By using an intersectional approach to disrupt the fixed narratives of a cohort of artists and craftspeople who also are researchers, there is an opportunity to help the researchers define themselves within their parameters, the way Karen Ducey describes her community: "[they] do anything and everything they can to live very fulfilled lives even if it is not [through] monetary fulfillment." The small practices and small successes may have as much significance as a practice that is

deemed larger or meets with what is perceived to be greater success. It is the community members/researchers that are defining their own data sets.

Reid and Frisby warn, “As women and men engaged in research for social change, it has been much harder to recognize the times that we have ourselves held power over others and possibly used our power in disempowering ways” (Reid & Frisby, 2008). In order to minimize the misappropriation of power, Reid and Frisby urge the pursuit of awareness, of reflexivity on the part of the coordinators of a research project to acknowledge possible failures and limitations so that those failures and limitations can be recognized as they appear in the work.

Simultaneously, by utilizing participatory action research with an epistemology rooted in the practices of Gibson-Graham, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is explicitly engaging in political work. By centering the research in social action, the project is seeking to raise awareness and agency of specific voices that have not had the same opportunities to be heard and acknowledged as other voices. Consciously, the choice is not to seek a random sampling of rote answers, but instead, ask purposefully for contemplative responses to a restructuring of perception and awareness. It is through this rethinking that the project seeks transformation. And then, through this new sense of possibility and agency, the researchers inspire action—utilizing the collective findings in ways that cater to the specifics of environment—“It is through action that we learn how the world works, what we can do, and who we are—we learn with heart and mind—and this is how we can become aware and emancipated” (Reid & Frisby, 2008). Inspired by Gibson-Graham, the project seeks a reflexive intersectional awareness as the artist and

artisan researchers pursue transformation, as well as the construction of an alternative economic narrative for artists and artisans.

Harding reminds that the positivist scientist's standpoint is one of privilege, and one must be careful not to reconstruct that same positivist guise in a different costume.

Only members of the powerful groups in societies stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality could imagine that their standards for knowledge and the claims resulting from adherence to such standards should be found preferable by all rational creatures, past, present, and future. (Harding, 2004)

What is constructed out of participatory action research is bound within a context of place and time, and within a particular environment. Instead of looking for generalizable findings or patterns, instead it is the inherently unique, exciting, or creative practices that can be used as starting points for new ideas. Rather than setting standards with universal applicability, the project seeks to strengthen the voices of the individuals and small groups, and help their actions and voices create space for those individuals and small groups to have agency and a sense of possibility. Similarly, transformative effects may reveal themselves in ways that we cannot predict, but instead one can anticipate what it means to validate and encourage those transformations.

By examining the structures that are assumed to be universal constructs, and reinterpreting them, participatory action research can give space to voices and engender agency where it was assumed to not exist. The hope is to not only introduce new ways of thinking about human and non-human relationships, but to model how it is enacted in how research methodologies are selected, the

construction of an ethical stance, and in the enactment of the planned project with a population.

Even as researchers seek to involve a community cohort in aspects of the design process and develop various findings out of a collective analysis, the coordinators of the research project assert their power to direct the framing of a project and instill a particular kind of intersectional worldview on the participants as they become researchers. This ethical stance, and how the coordinators' power is utilized to reinforce this stance, is crucial to balance and/or account for with attentiveness to, and respect for, the artist and artisan researchers and the ethical stances they bring to the project.

Cameron and Gibson frame their ethical stance in this way, "A poststructuralist approach involves carefully interrogating the potential effects of different languages and representations, and self-consciously selecting particular representations because of their potential political effects" (Cameron & Gibson, *Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein*, 2005). The "selection of particular representations" is intentional with an intended "political effect." Within the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, this is a focus on the non-capitalist and alternative capitalist practices, and an asset-based perspective to problem solving. Utilizing this particular representation enables the project to move away from the preexisting dominant narrative of Franklin County residents, and Franklin County artists and artisans in particular, as impoverished, unsupported, and infantilized in their inability to provide for themselves.

Shifting from Needs to Assets

The deficit narrative of Franklin County, Massachusetts is reinforced in text from a Greenfield Community College grant application to the Massachusetts Cultural Council that utilizes standard template language showing Franklin County as home to 23 of the 27 poorest towns in Massachusetts, the lowest per capita income rates of the 14 counties in Massachusetts, and from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that annual wages for workers is \$38,224 for Franklin County, which is then \$13,776 below the national average (Patisteas, 2015). This narrative of a region in need is not uniquely crafted by the community college, but is a product of the needs-based orientation of granting institutions where it is perceived that a community's destitution or desperation might compel favor⁷.

The portrayal of a region in need feeds into a negative subject position for those living in the region and restricts that region's horizon of possibility. Jenny Cameron and Katherine Gibson portray a similar narrative in the Latrobe Valley, Victoria, Australia.

Our concern is that this dominant and oft-repeated local representation of a destroyed Valley hides and even undermines the diverse range of economic activities that are practiced in the alternative sector, and that might be the basis for further economic development.

Perhaps even more concerning is that the constant repetition of the representation of a destroyed and decimated Valley fuels the despair and hopelessness felt by many. It robs residents of any sense of economic possibility other than to be dependent on special assistance packages from government or the benevolence of a yet-to-be-secured major employer. It reinforces the subject position of dependence prevalent during the days of the SEC and reinforces a sense of powerlessness and victimhood. (Cameron & Gibson, Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein, 2005)

Similarly, Franklin County in recent history, has been challenged, and at times defined by, the “dominant and oft-repeated local representation” of a destroyed post-manufacturing economy, and more recently, a community afflicted with large population of opiate addicts. This representation is exacerbated by a local sense of disconnect and disenfranchisement between Boston and its suburbs, where policy and budget are created and prioritized, and rural Franklin County that is neither Cape Cod nor the Berkshires (the traditional tourist attractions for Massachusetts). On a more personal level, Interviewee Deborah Andrews related that unemployment accentuates isolation, diminishes as sense of self, and takes away any sense of agency. Andrews’ narrative of isolation and lack of agency was a common initial response, and for much of the beginning work of the Fostering Art and Culture Project, including the marketing plan, starting from a needs-based perspective often garnered a similar response.

The aim of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is to shift away from a uniform portrayal of need and absence in Franklin County. Instead, by focusing on the diverse economic activity of the artists and artisans in the region, the project can foster a positive economic identity, and provide an opportunity to direct funding and efforts towards community centered, endogenous, economic practices. The exploration of diverse community economies through participatory action research can create change that strengthens community on a local scale by opening up opportunities for possibility, and validating what may have been under valued activities.

In most PAR the subject is understood as having a deep and pre-existing identity that is repressed or alienated by structures, like capitalism and

patriarchy. With the right trigger—involvement in PAR—“hitherto stifled thoughts and voices” and the “capacity to envision a freer world lying dormant in the oppressed consciousness of subjugated people” will be released, placing the subject on the road to emancipation and liberation. (Cameron & Gibson, Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein, 2005)

For artists and artisans in the region, the needs-based narrative was reducing the agency of individuals and devaluing the collaborative work of peer groups and non-artist and artisan community members. The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project seeks to be Cameron and Gibson’s “trigger” that enables the artists and artisans to perform their vision of community and economy.

Central to the participatory action research is the role of the community members as researchers and the role of the facilitators or coordinators. Hesse-Biber and Yaiser remind us, “[...] communities produce knowledge. The personal beliefs an individual holds only become knowledge when they have been legitimated by society” (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, *Difference Matters: Studying Across Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality*, 2004). One of the jobs of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project co-coordinators was to facilitate the dissemination of community produced data/information and try to help facilitate the legitimization of that data/information into knowledge. The stories, narratives, practices, information, and data from individuals, can develop into broader applicable ideas, themes, or narratives, and then these are relayed back to the larger community on individual or small group scales and large community gatherings as examples, proof of an active community with agency.

Notes

¹ For example, a community diversity committee is examining the possibility of a participatory action research methodology, in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, to learn more about the people of color in Franklin County and highlight people of color's contributions to the community economy of the region.

² <http://www.stemedcoalition.org>

³ <http://stemtosteam.org>

⁴ Kim Parkhurst and her husband work in both the physical, hands-on world of Western Massachusetts, but they also work in the digital realm utilizing the opportunities the internet provides to choose to live in a place that is more in line with their sensibilities than the urban locations where they once lived.

⁵ "The globalization script normalizes an act of non-reciprocal penetration. Capitalist social and economic relations are scripted as penetrating 'other' social and economic relations but not vice versa. (The penis can penetrate or invade a woman's body, but a woman cannot imprint, invade, or penetrate a Man.) Now that socialism is no longer perceived as a threat (having relinquished its toehold on strategic parts of the globe), globalization is the prerogative of capitalism alone. After the experience of penetration - by commodification, market incorporation, proletarianization, MNC invasion - something is lost, never to be regained. All forms of noncapitalism become damaged, violated, fallen, subordinated to capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 1996)."

⁶ (Gibson-Graham, 1996)

⁷ The 2013 census states Franklin County's per capita income at \$29,259.00 (\$35,763 MA); median household income at \$53,663.00 (\$66,866 MA); and the persons below poverty level at 12.1 percent (11.4 percent MA).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Examining Epistemology and Positionality

Through delineating my own individual positionality and epistemology I can provide a window into the worlds I inhabit and the worlds I hope to enact through research. I can also utilize my own epistemology to be wary about Harding's concerns about how power can distort perspective, which in this case, is the power of the academic researcher as knowledge keeper or authority. My own epistemology is informed by race, ethnicity, social class, and to a certain degree, Catholicism, which recognizes fallibility as a human trait and promotes an awareness of fallibility within one's self.

I adhere to a concept that all of my work (by work I include the work that I am paid for on an hourly or salaried basis as well as my work as an artist or father, and all the multiple roles I may inhabit in the course of a day) is social action, an effort to produce a world that I would wish to inhabit. Emanating from that base is a desire to produce research that is oriented towards social action and a practitioner's perspective. By tempering an admiration of theory with practical ways to work within parameters of constraints, I have learned that the constraints are not so much about restrictions or barriers, but a form of intersectionality that has the potential to enhance one's approach. Hesse-Biber and Yaiser remind us that if we are not attentive to intersectionality, "[i]ndividuals living in society are then assigned one location along each dimension of inequality. This quantitative research process does not and cannot recognize individuals who exist at more than one

location in each dimension (multiracial individuals for example) or whose location changes (class)” (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, *Difference Matters: Studying Across Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality*, 2004). My own intersectionality as an Asian American man, a father, a writer, an academic, a musician, among others, informs a desire to locate people along multiple dimensions. By perceiving my own limitations and biases, the constructs within our environments, and opening one’s self to empathy with others, I allow for a reflexivity that is not about closing off possibilities, but one that attempts to recognize where spaces for possibility might emerge.

In addition, my interpretation of a holistic approach to research is one that is objective within a context, and yet employs multiple standpoint perspectives throughout the generation, design, implementation, and analysis stages of research. In describing a feminist epistemology Sprague and Kobrynowicz draw from Haraway: “Haraway says the best way to gain a critical perspective on one’s situated view is to know how things look from a different position. Access to two [or more] ways of looking at a phenomenon reveals the limits and constructedness of each. Because each of us experiences life and ourselves in multiple facets that are ‘stitched together imperfectly,’ empathy is possible and, through it, two knowers in distinct situations can make a partial connection” (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). By recognizing that the objectivity of scientific positivism and the desire to alter positionality through intersectionality is not absolute, I call upon the idea that self-awareness is never complete, and that we will all influence our research regardless of the safeguards we employ. We should recognize that, and employ reflexive practices that value the human nature of research as one values the unique

individuality of art. There is a literacy to understanding how to think critically about research that allows us to question assumptions and applicability without invalidating work that has been done. And, it asks us to build upon what we know and learn. I respect how the self plays into our approaches to problems and possibilities.

The multiple standpoint perspectives that Sprague and Kobrynowicz describe, is the idea that no one location has the best perspective. However, I do believe that after attempting to view a problem from a variety of worldviews, we can then decide how to weight those perspectives as we move to action. I also am certain that one needs to identify what aspects of difference to be attentive to, and perhaps re-evaluate those aspects at multiple points in the process. Are we attentive to gender, sexual orientation, race, class, ability, age, etc.? How are we confirming that? When should we check again? And, why are we being attentive to those aspects of difference and power? “Feminists have from the beginning rejected positivism’s ideal of a ‘value-free’ science, arguing instead that the goal of research must be to help the oppressed understand and fight against their oppression” (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). By integrating these processes into the construction of the project one can naturalize them in the same way one takes into account other features. It does not diminish the reality that research may not, at a particular site or point in time, address all the issues raised, but it reinforces an awareness of absences and what those implications might be, and why one would choose to address research from a feminist perspective.

I suppose, if I had an overall epistemology, it would be one that is centered on the quality of life and increasing opportunities, creating space, and performing in that space, ways to make the intangible, tangible. I work to change the narratives of inevitability and disempowerment, to ones of agency and possibility. I arrive at my epistemological position from something that feels like an increasingly common poststructural contemporary existence. One that emerges from a Korean diaspora, where I came from an educated and artistic family, both parents gifted and artistic émigrés from the 1960s, who settled in the most affordable home in a very affluent suburb of Boston, a quintessential upper middle-class, white environment. Out of this upbringing, I emerged with a heightened awareness of contradictions and disconnects, the contradictions of privilege and discrimination, identity and ethnicity, and the arrival of social consciousness and its lack of execution. I was learning about intersectionality without recognizing it. I was learning a poststructural perspective on how there is no fixed truth, but only where we assign meaning. I lived in one town where I went to school and ate pizza for lunch, I walked into a house where we ate dried squid while watching TV, I played football on a team with three people of color, and went to church in Brookline where the sermon was delivered in Korean and everyone sitting in the pews had black hair. I grew up with the privilege of an upbringing where I enjoyed all the benefits of an affluent public school, all the basic needs provided by my parents, and yet it was also tinged with the sensibility of the immigrant experience, a post-war immigration, a post-colonial immigration, a two hundred dollars sewn into the lining of a suitcase

immigration, and the continued influx of each sponsored relative moving into the spare basement room, or displacing my brother or me in one of our bedrooms.

This sense of identity, while formulated at times by peers and various communities or institutions as static, was instead something much more fluid and dynamic. “Race, class, gender and sexuality are contextual. Although they persist throughout history, race, class, gender, and sexuality hierarchies are never static and fixed, but constantly undergo change as part of new economic, political, and ideological processes, trends and events” (Weber, 1998). My own response to these contradictions was to rebel against the structures that tried to define who I might be as a model minority, an athlete, a man, etc. I gravitated towards boundaries and upsetting people’s sense of expectations, whether it was the college environment I chose or social affiliations.

Ultimately, what began to happen was an awareness of synthesis, that I could draw strengths from all the disparate aspects of my life in a way that integrated into something that seemed to fit the sense of self I aspired to embody.

According to a poststructuralist perspective the presumption that the social world can be accurately known, and truthfully and objectively represented in language is questionable; words are political tools that contribute to shaping the social world, relationships and subjects. Similarly poststructuralism has eroded confidence in determining social structures or systems; instead there are multiple and endless determinations, none of which has precedence. (Cameron & Gibson, Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein, 2005)

I developed a strong sense of social justice, working with different populations, urban and rural poor, soup kitchens, alternative schools, orphanages; a sense of social responsibility, starting the Sewanee Coalition for Peace and The Cumberland, an underground newspaper; and artistic expression through writing poetry and

fiction, music, and my brush ink work. And I started to have a sense of history and society as a continuum, something that is movable in how we refer to it and utilize it to form a sense of self. Collectively these things contributed to an intuitive sense of intersectionality, “Multiple consciousness implies that intersectionality creates people that possess understandings of multiple locations within the social hierarchy, not just within one’s culture, but also with the potential of a global awareness of difference of interconnected systems of power (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, *Feminist Approaches to Research as a Process: Reconceptualizing Epistemology, Methodology, and Method*, 2004). My experienced life was one that constantly shifted from agency to powerlessness, from contemplative composure to passionate performance. I lived in the affluent suburbs and worked weekends at my mother’s store in Brigham’s Circle in Boston, Massachusetts. I was a man who played football and wrestled, and simultaneously, a Korean man in a community that viewed Asians, particularly in the 1980s-90s, as safe, nerdy, emasculated men.

Over time, my personal intersectional perspectives informed my educational pathways and employment in ways that allowed me to continue border crossing. Therefore, finding the activist approach of the Community Economies Collective, and Julie Graham in particular, enabled me to draw connections between theory and applied practice bridging two different academic worlds, that of the university as a student, and that of the community college where I am an administrator, and the possibilities engendered as an activist researcher appealed to me. Cameron and Gibson make the direct connection of poststructuralism to participatory action research.

Poststructuralism highlights the political nature of all knowledge-making, just as PAR appreciates that politics infuses every aspect of so-called objective and expert knowledge. Poststructuralism recognizes that language constructs the world, just as PAR seeks to ensure that everyday knowledges are used to shape the lives of ordinary people. (Cameron & Gibson, Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein, 2005)

It is perhaps, natural then that one who experiences a poststructural existence gravitates towards a methodology that embraces poststructural realities in the recognition and generation of knowledge.

A Researcher's Epistemology

I arrived at Julie Graham's doorstep after spending several years working on creative economy development primarily through the lens of cluster economies and Richard Florida where the primary focus was on marketing and amenities.

Emerging from the Northern Tier study commissioned by Congressman John Olver, the Fostering Art and Culture Partnership (FACP) was formed in 2005. This partnership included area artists, the Franklin and Hampshire Counties' Regional Employment Board, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Shelburne Falls Area Business Association, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, town planners from Montague and Greenfield, and Greenfield Community College the organization I represented. The FACP pursued and received initial funding through the Massachusetts Cultural Council's John and Abigail Adams Grant, and subsequently pursued and received funding from federal appropriations through the Fund to Improve Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) and the Department of Transportation, and a subsequent round of the Adams Grant.

In its initial incarnation, the FACP sought to raise awareness of local artists, craftspeople, and members of the creative economy (broadly defined and drawing

from Richard Florida's creative class structure), and educate residents about the potential synergy of drawing together a cluster where people could share resources, network, and begin to develop a coherent plan for a county-wide creative economy cluster modeled on the technology cluster on Massachusetts' Route 128 corridor, and the success of Asheville, North Carolina. The first year's work culminated in a Creative Economy Summit, held at Greenfield Community College, where summit attendees heard from local legislators, addresses from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Anita Walker, and attended a keynote presentation by Stuart Rosenfeld. In addition, attendees joined breakout sessions and crafted a first draft of the Franklin County Manifesto, a document outlining the goals and beliefs of how the community could step forward and support a creative economy cluster in Franklin County.

What emerged after the summit and a year of intense programming focused on professional development for artists, was a high level of energy and enthusiasm. However, faced with a temporary period of decreased funding, utilizing the community's energy and enthusiasm was challenging. The FACP board decided to reassess the approach, back away from immediate direct support and workshops for artists and craftspeople, and look at the larger challenges for the cluster in the county. One of the consistent messages, both voiced and produced in the Creative Economy Summit, was the need for more visitors to come to the region to spend money in the local creative economy, and the need to market local artists and craftspeople to garner more tourism and raise the profile of the creative economy for local residents, businesses, and politicians.

After additional funding was secured, the FACP worked to pursue the larger issue of expanding the exogenous impact on the creative economy by hiring a marketing firm. The FACP's own scan of the county identified a hub and spoke model for orienting the landscape (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Hub and Spokes Model

The county contains five primary communities that serve as hubs through which most traffic and information passes, Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, Deerfield, Turners Falls, and (a little less specifically defined) the North Quabbin area. Surrounding these hubs are the smaller villages and towns, which, while they retain unique and specific qualities, either do not have the population, market identity, or downtown density that the hub communities do. The North Quabbin area, while not a specific

city or town, was anchored by the North Quabbin Woods organization in Orange. The FACP sought proposals from local and regional marketing organizations, and ultimately picked a Boston based firm, Open the Door, purposefully seeking an outsider's perspective to check the organization's own assumptions about community identity, its perception of the creative economy, and to hopefully add insights drawn from a different perspective and a different pool of experience (Open the Door had recently developed marketing plans for The Freedom Trail, and the cities of Salem, and Worcester, Massachusetts). Open the Door was given the task of developing five marketing plans that would specifically address the needs of each hub community, and a sixth marketing plan that would address the county as a whole. The marketing firm would then be retained for a year to provide consultation as the FACP worked to implement Open the Door's findings and plans.

The countywide marketing plan set forth a series of long term objectives that served as the epistemological basis for the methodology of the marketing plan.

The long-term objectives of the marketing program are to:

- Increase the region's capacity to offer arts and culture programs, outdoor activities, and public educational programs;
- Increase the region's capacity to develop artist businesses and the creative economy;
- Build the capacity and earnings of artists and arts-related businesses; and
- Increase cultural tourism and income to the region by the creation and implementation of a marketing campaign, as well as the creation/support of regional events. (Pappas, *Fostering the Arts and Culture 5 Hub Marketing Plan Draft*, 2010)

What emerged was an interesting reexamination of the community's possibilities.

The primary starting point for almost every interview for the marketing plan was asking, What do artists need? What emerged was all very important and vital in

different ways, but also incomprehensible to envision for much of the region. The emphasis for measuring success was clearly placed on revenue growth, but how to get there using existing resources and existing politics seemed daunting. However, if the real reason for economic development is not tied to growth in revenue generation, but rather tied to improving the quality of life that people experience, then that opens up a realm of additional or alternative objectives.

Segedy reminds us of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society as a way to center the work of economic development and the creative economy, "[...] the Great Society is concerned not with how much, but how good—not with the quantity of goods, but with the quality of our lives" (Segedy, 1997). By expanding one's perspective beyond a more traditional capitalocentric world view on economic development, and expanding it to include a diverse community economy we begin to examine the multiplicity of activities that help shape the quality of life for the people we most wish to impact. While some of this is addressed through capitalist practices, the non-capitalist practices of the diverse economy are just as important and valuable.

Epistemology of Collaboration

Framing a joined epistemology with co-coordinator, Abby Templer, in a diverse economy model required a simultaneous withdrawal from the disquieting shadow of a capitalist architecture, one built upon popular media (television, radio, magazines, newspapers, internet) and mechanized by desire (advertising, and the framing of consumerism), and an immersion into that which is implicitly or explicitly labeled as ineffective and marginal. It is the strong theory of capitalism that reinforces the hopelessness of practices our communities are engaged in, and

from that capitalocentric perspective, the community economy practices are modes of survival, vestiges of superfluous appendages, amalgamations of pre-professional activities. But, to reframe how and what we question, and what we assume to have power, each of the activities, each of the actions, become features in the landscape of an interconnected social geography. The capitalist practices, the diverse economy practices, and the community building practices help to collaboratively produce the environment, landscape, and place we inhabit and seek to inhabit.

Recently, on a visit to the Double Edge Theater in rural Ashfield, Massachusetts there was a special run of three plays performed in one night. Before the first production, the audience waited in a barn converted into a studio space, and then, when the actors were ready, the audience crossed a short yard under a gauntlet of umbrellas held up to shield us from the rain. The main performance stage was on the second floor of what used to be a dairy barn. Tiered seating was arranged on either of the long walls, and the audience watched the action occur between the tiered seating, and up into the rafters at the far end of the barn. After a break, where the audience returned to the studio for a light dinner of locally produced butternut squash soup and salad, they returned to the dairy barn to find the tiered seating had been shifted to the short end of the barn where they watched the performance unfold in front of them and into the high rafters. After a break for tea and coffee, the audience returned yet again, and found the tiered seating arranged, this time, towards the opposite end of the barn, where yet another set had been constructed for a wholly different performance.

What was truly illustrative by what the Double Edge Theater troupe created, was, by altering perspective, by a change of wardrobe, and a minimal redistribution of props, the same stage area, the same building, the same barn, became a different world. The barn became a world in which the *UnPossessed* an adaptation of *Don Quixote* could inhabit, another world was created in which a non-linear visage of Bruno Shultz's, *Republic of Dreams* could form, and finally, one world was formed in which the sorrowfully faux anti-Semitic Nashville opera house of *The Disappearance* could exist. In fact, the experience of inhabiting the alternate realities, within the scope of space that the audience knew to be a barn, that had been identified as a place with beams, wood floors, and a generous furnace, this transformative experience followed the audience beyond the confines of that specific space and out into the night and the long ride home. The actors literally performed alternate realities that, for a moment in time, coexisted with the reality of the dairy barn, and for the audience members during the performance, supplanted the reality of the dairy barn as primary.

To reconfigure the epistemology is to reconfigure the ontology in a way that is not so different from the willing theater patron¹. The world is one that unfolds with a complexity that asks to be contemplated and not taken as a random moment in time, but as an act that has been carefully crafted and shaped by a community. The world that unfolds asks for imagination to fill in the space between ideas and gestures, and the mind, when goaded to comply, does. What we see are not actors on stilts waving flags, but great windmills on a landscape.

It is here that we confront a choice: to continue to marginalize (by ignoring or disparaging) the plethora of hidden and alternative economic activities

that contribute to social well-being and environmental regeneration, or to make them the focus of our research and teaching in order to make them more “real”, more credible, more viable as objects of policy and activism, more present as everyday realities that touch all our lives and dynamically shape our futures. This is the performative ontological project of “diverse economies.” (Gibson-Graham, *Diverse economies: performative practices for “other worlds”*, 2008)

This performative ontological project creates new physical environments of reality, and within this action is the formation of an ethics that embrace performance, that ask us as academics to pursue the imaginative, to embrace the empathic exhortations of the players, and to succumb to the desire to join in the act of creation².

Not all the world is a theater troupe, but, by sharing the ethics of possibility and diversity, we can help others recognize that all the world is a stage, and that different realities are being performed constantly all around us. By recognizing the action and actors, and how we are participating as passive or active subjects, these realities are drawn into focus and begin to take form. We can recognize how the lighting, costume, and set design, all play into what initially appears to be the work of a few talented individuals.

By extending the understanding of space, possibility, and reality, we simultaneously clarify how the performance is constructed, and make even more transformative the capacity for the performance to transcend the perceived limitations. Environment becomes a metaphysical construct as well as a physical one, and this expands and enriches understanding of how we as human beings interact with the performed reality.

With this vision, rather than treating the local as naturally inward-looking and parochial, we might engage in ethical projects of extending the local

imagination to what is outside, enrolling an understanding of place “as generous and hospitable”[...]. The academic task becomes not to explain why localities are incapable of looking beyond their boundaries but to explore how they might do so. (Gibson-Graham, *Diverse economies: performative practices for "other worlds"*, 2008)

Gibson-Graham asks us to imagine alternate possibilities, and to treat that as an explicit reality rather than an inevitable failure. Or even more bluntly, “There is suspicion that our attempt to bring diverse economic practices into visibility and encourage construction of community enterprises has ‘engineered’ the very responses that support our thesis. To this last accusation, we plead guilty. Our research interventions can be seen as a form of ethical political action” (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006). As much as the playwrights and actors are intentional about shaping an alternate reality, so too are the activist researchers, guided not by a script, but an ethical ontology.

The creativity of performance is built upon an interaction that extends across a whole community. On a November night in Ashfield, the performance extended from the actors, to the whole troupe, to the audience members. Within a community, it is the recognition of the linkages of interconnectivity that help produce assets that are tangible and real for people. The community economy is about the tangible, is about touch, is about emotion, and rather than the paradoxical ethereality of products and things, the community economy is about a tactile experience that is lived rather than achieved through the abstract constructs of wealth and monetary value³.

Building from assets is a fortifying action, one that calls upon individuals to work within expanding circles of radii encompassing greater definitions of

community. The closeness of an immediate family grows to encompass all the actors who are upholding an environment. For an alternate environment to exist, to be hewn out of the capitalocentric space, the actors need to be loved as one loves a child or a partner. What is beyond the capitalocentric experience, beyond its capacity for empathy, is a richness filled by the diverse activities that build the community economy.

However loosely and attractively depicted, building a community economy is not simply a process of ethical decision making among people who are creating something uncharted and unpredictable, but rather the realization of an ideal—putting the cart of common substance, it would seem, before the ethical and political horse. (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006)

The cart, the key understanding for building the community economy is geologic in a commonality of location or “localism” and also includes a shared way of being—community (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006). Even within these concepts there are intersectional perspectives where virtual spaces and communities may ferment ever more diverse perspectives on what is local and how one can represent community.

Before the first line is recited, before the first piece of cloth is stitched, or set piece painted, the play must be written. Placing ink to paper is a performative action; it spawns a new reality out of alphanumeric digits. And, as a community of actors (academics, researchers, community members), we read those words and imagine how they might exist within an environment of wooden beams and barn board walls. We collect the props that will allow our imagination to alight for a moment. We alter our clothes, and seek ways to become the characters we wish to embody. And finally, we ask others to join us in the act of creation, in the act of

realization, so that this world, this space, this environment can be inhabited with possibility. “[S]ocial research is an explicitly political intervention that not only represents, but constitutes, reality” (Cameron & Gibson, Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein, 2005). The researcher is not so distant from the playwright and actor.

Utilizing a poststructuralist epistemology that embraces the complexity of intersectionality, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project takes the performativity of research as a starting point. Both co-coordinators strive to perform a social justice oriented world and part of how this is accomplished in this context is through making economic diversity visible to counter a homogeneous economic perspective. The poststructuralist methods of deconstruction, decentering, and highlighting diversity, when coupled with participatory action research forms the core of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project’s methodology. Working collaboratively with communities is central to the social justice oriented world the coordinators seek to enact. Thus, the primary components of the methodology are collaborative relationships between the co-coordinators, between the coordinators and the artist and artisan researchers, and between the research team and the community of interviewees.

Collaboration

I was introduced to collaboration in a graduate seminar with Prof. Julie Graham; she created a comfortable space where the students could foster mutual respect with each other as co-creators of knowledge and understanding. That camaraderie extended beyond the class and, with Julie’s encouragement a group of

students decided to do a panel together for the Rethinking Marxism conference. So many of us were enthused about the conference that Julie suggested that the students pair up and co-present in order to allow each of us to share in the experience. This is how Abby and I started writing together.

We discovered that working together, rather than being a liability, made each of our works stronger. Collaboration allowed us to learn from each other through seeing how the other person engaged with theory and the ways the theory could be applied to a variety of cases in a variety of ways. It also forced us to bring together disparate ideas in ways that strengthened the commonalities. Collaboration helped bring possibility to light in ways that were hard, if not impossible to do in isolation. So, in teaching us about collaboration, both through her own modeling of collaboration in writing and research, and through her encouragement for the conference, Julie gave us the skills to be collaborative teachers and learners in the production of knowledge.

Now that Abby and I have experienced the collaborative process we recognize that all research is produced socially and that collaboration is consciously political. By highlighting what we create as academics as co-produced (either as co-coordinators or in conjunction with our artist and artisan researchers), we are also situating ourselves in the collaborative world that we would like to inhabit.

As political act, we saw collaboration as an extension of an epistemological stance that embraced the possibility engendered when people are able to work together in ways that create strength that was not present in its separate parts. The act of collaboration allows for an intersectionality that is more dynamic than can be

achieved by one's self. David Demeritt writes, "the potential rationales for developing more collaborative and participatory social research practices range from the epistemological (more accurate, self-aware, or self-critical research) to the ethical (more just, inclusive, democratic, or consensual research), and the instrumental (more empowering, effective, socially transformative, or action-oriented research)" (Demeritt, 2005). By extending this collaboration into the community through the adoption of a participatory action research methodology, community members were included in the process of relaying information about their own community, and then, they worked together collectively to analyze their findings and develop narratives and insights, a reflexivity that was shared by and with the community. Demeritt places the emphasis well as he expands the vision of what research can accomplish:

Often the most important and lasting effects of collaborative research are not the discrete research findings [...], but the new roles and relationships that can emerge through the process of engaging in collaborative research. Feminists, for instance, have long emphasized that the intersubjective processes of trust building, mutual understanding, and social learning involved in doing research can be as important for participants as the substantive results (Maguire, 1987). Increasingly, government policy also now recognizes that "innovation is not a smooth or linear process" (HM Treasury, 2002, paragraph 1.20), and that the two-way traffic in ideas as well as in skills and personnel between universities and other organizations can be as important an outcome of collaborative research as any substantive research 'findings.' (Demeritt, 2005)

Both the process, and the product of collaboration are important outcomes, the "discrete research findings" and the "two-way traffic in ideas." The conversation that emerges out of collaboration is part of the transformative potential where people begin to share and understand one another and thereby strengthen the bonds of community one interaction at a time.

Collaboration also added a measure of accountability, that the coordinators and researchers had to maintain expectations, both to each other, and to the communities we worked with. This accountability was something that was strengthening and something that connected us fundamentally to each other, and to our communities. The accountability modeled how we hoped people would be able to draw from and give to each other as the fundamental ethical core of relationships.

Notes

¹ Abby and I pondered the direction of this relationship—the chicken and the egg—can a shift in epistemology reconfigure ontology the same way a reconfigured ontology alters one's epistemology. In other words, can a person whose ontology is based on a capitalocentric world view, engage in diverse economic practices that become the transformative medium through which she or he rethinks their ontology, just as one who shifts an ontology from a capitalocentric world view to a diverse economy world view then engages with the environment through an altered epistemology. We were excited at the prospect of both flows.

² Can performance impact knowledge and understanding in a similar way to how one regards performativity? Is performance only about creating the capacity to imagine, or is it also creating reality? While the barn is not Spain, the barn is a space of possibility if the viewer lets her or himself to believe. So is this space of possibility the creation of a reality? When one is a patron at Collective Copies, a worker owned collective in Amherst, and the next day is a patron of Staples' copy center, does that minimize the performative reality? If there is a Spain in Europe, does that diminish the existence of an imagined reality in a performance space in Ashfield, Massachusetts? Does an imagined reality carry the same weight as a physical reality? Is there a difference between the two? Does imagining that something exists provide us with the motivation to move through the world, even if we recognize that imagining's construction?

³ When I think about a capitalocentric economy, the basis for satisfaction is through abstract concepts like wealth or currency or value of material items. The diverse economy or community economy generates its value through interactions with other people. Let's think about it in terms of the creative economy. The capitalocentric model seeks to generate wealth, it seeks to draw in tourists for the express purpose of redistributing money. The community focused creative economy is more interested in on how a region's population of artists and artisans can work and are working together to perform a world that already contains value for the artists and artisans and their community. The first sees the region as intrinsically value less and the second sees the region as value filled.

The Act of Creation in a Community Economy

If the capitalocentric form of fulfillment most visibly takes the form of consumerism—the ownership of products, of things—then the fulfillment of a community economy most visibly comes from the act of creation, the fruition of creativity (creative expression), the manifestation of imagination. The ethics of the researchers acted as a guide that allowed us to ask permission to become witness to these acts of creation, and despite what advertising agencies would wish to foist on a captive audience, there is nothing as seductive as the act of creation. To become aware of creation, to witness it, is to spawn the desire to contribute to its creation, to foster its fruition, to honor its emergence into the reimagined space of possibility.

What if we were to accept that the goal of theory is not to extend knowledge by confirming what we already know, that the world is a place of domination and oppression? What if we asked theory instead to help us see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility? (Gibson-Graham, *Diverse economies: performative practices for "other worlds"*, 2008)

Theory then becomes, not a tool whose fundamental utility is critique, but a tool whose fundamental utility is to build and create. By recognizing the action and actors, how we are participating as passive or active subjects, and that there are reliable and unreliable narrators, these realities are drawn into focus and begin to take form. We can become literate participants rather than passive observers in how the community economy is performed in relation to, or independently of the capitalist economy. Participatory action research enables the researchers to engage a community and collaboratively participate in the generation of something new and claim a communal ownership and communal development of narratives that are

generated by and maintained by the same people who then share those narratives with others.

Shaping the Alternate Reality

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project proposes that utilizing artists and artisans as the source of knowledge for factors that impact their quality of life, and the source of solutions to their economic challenges, can raise the awareness of creative approaches to a diverse community economy and create better pathways to development of the creative economy than standard export based economic practices. By raising the profile of artists' contribution to the economic sustainability of the region, we can better value the endogenous assets already present in the region. We can also begin to reimagine an alternate way of surveying an economic landscape and creating economic development plans that serve to benefit non-capitalist, alternative capitalist, and capitalist practices across multiple sectors (business, service, food production, etc.)¹. But, at the core of our research is defining a purpose of an economy as a system that seeks to improve the quality of life for people (Graham, 2008)².

The research team is taking a performative approach to research, starting from the epistemological position that "knowledge [is] a practice of performing the world that we live in, and perhaps more importantly of performing the world that we *might* live in" (Cameron, From Problem-Solving to Performativity, Expertise to Experimentation: Researching Poverty and Marginalization, 2008). This approach follows the intellectual tradition of J.K. Gibson-Graham to highlight and support existing diverse economic practices through our research, aiming to enact the world

we want to inhabit. The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is applying this approach to the Franklin County, Massachusetts (and its environs), arguing traditional development models and understandings of the economy seldom value the voices and activities of regional artists, artisans, and cultural organizations, masking the reality of the importance of these groups. Focusing solely on the capitalist economy, as performed by mainstream development tactics, renders the diverse economic practices of these individuals and groups invisible to the very communities they most benefit. A performative approach recognizes that research is not value neutral; rather, values become the ethical base for performing the community economy.

Artists infuse politics, heritage, history, environment, and culture into their work, and they often incorporate alternative visions of the economy into their lives with sometimes surprising clarity. It therefore appears natural that, for people who experience a poststructural existence that traverses borders, is often marginalized, and values alternative or multiple perspectives, that these people, these artists and artisans gravitate towards a methodology that embraces poststructural realities in the recognition and generation of knowledge.

When asked, in one of the initial training exercises, to define an economy, our artist and artisan researchers spoke predictably of stock markets, commodity speculation, and a disconnection to the actual lived lives of most people. But, once we framed a concept of a community economy, and helped our artists and artisans to see that they were already engaged in a community economy shaping value in the work they do every day, the concept of a community economy then felt like common

sense, a concept that was almost too fundamental in their lives to recognize. To reframe how and what we question, and what we assume to have power, each of the activities, each of the actions, become features in the landscape of an interconnected socio-economic geography. The capitalist practices, the diverse economic practices, and the community building practices all work together to help produce the environment (the foundation, walls, and roof) we inhabit and seek to inhabit.

Researchers as Activist Artists and Artisans

Abby and I started recruiting artists and artisans to become researchers for the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project in August 2010 by holding four informational presentations (Franklin Community Cooperative Market, Greenfield Community College's two campuses, and Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Hall), and placing advertisements in the Greenfield Recorder, the local newspaper; the Fostering Art and Culture Project's mailing list; Facebook; Craigslist; and email list serves. We received inquiries of interest from over forty artists and artisans. We utilized group and individual interviews to ascertain appropriate interpersonal skills, primarily an ability to work collaboratively with others and an openness to new asset-based perspectives. The twenty-three selected artists and artisans were also selected to represent the widest range of diversity we could achieve in gender, race, art or craft, age, and geographic location.

In early September all researchers went through an intensive two-day training where they received information on identifying diverse economic practices within the creative economy by using the iceberg diagram and cataloging the activities they are engaged in throughout a typical day; utilizing asset-based

assessment strategies, including asset mapping; deconstructing existing assumptions about the economy and artists and artisans; learning interview techniques by generating interview questions and modeling for each other initial interviews; and research ethics as guided by the University of Massachusetts' Institutional Review Board. After researchers completed their first interviews, we met again to troubleshoot problems that arose and share early successes and early findings. In early November the researchers, for the most part finished with their interviews, reconvened to share their experiences, debrief, and begin analysis.

As the researchers were all artists and artisans, they were invited to create reflective pieces that emerged from their process of research and analysis for an art show in a local gallery. In addition, the artists became the spokespeople for the research and had the opportunity to share their research at local creative economy networking events and a Fostering Art and Culture Project's Creative Economy Summit. At the end of the project, the artist and artisan researchers received \$500.00 of compensation funded through a grant from the University of Massachusetts' President's Creative Economy Fund, the Massachusetts Cultural Council's John and Abigail Adams Economic Development Grant, and support from Greenfield Community College. In addition, co-coordinators Abby Templer and I have been sharing the methodology and initial findings at local, regional, and national venues.

The project engaged the artists and artisans in a collaboration to create an alternative model of development that privileged diverse readings of the economy that included community economy practices. The goal of the project was not

necessarily growth, but to explore what sustainability meant for artists and artisans, how they engaged in a lifestyle that prioritizes creativity and self-expression, and how we could share those practices with others in the county so that they too could benefit from the nourishment of self expression and contribute to its strengthening. We engaged with our community of artists and artisans in a process of discovery.

Utilizing this asset-based approach to development, the community researchers and co-coordinators interviewed 135 peer artists and artisans. In this collaborative research process, the knowledge was generated and collected by the research community, and the research community owns the research and directs the implementation of their own development plans. The alternate reality becomes the lived reality of a diverse community economy.

Notes

¹ We can see some of these techniques in action with the hybrid research collectives occurring in Mindanao and Australia (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, *An Economic Ethics for the Anthropocene*, 2009).

² In my first encounter with Julie Graham, on a sunny afternoon in August on the patio outside Rao's Café in Amherst, Massachusetts, she posed the question, "What is an economy?" We settled on this definition, and I think in later years she would have expanded the definition to include all living things in our biota.

CHAPTER 4

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

The exploration of diverse community economies through participatory action research can create change that strengthens community on a local scale and opens up the opportunities for possibility. Engaging in the research itself is transformative for the researchers and the interviewees, and then there is potential to expand the reach of that transformative experience by sharing what was learned and creating actions that emerge out of that research.

In most PAR [Participatory Action Research] the subject is understood as having a deep and pre-existing identity that is repressed or alienated by structures, like capitalism and patriarchy. With the right trigger— involvement in PAR—“hitherto stifled thoughts and voices” and the “capacity to envision a freer world lying dormant in the oppressed consciousness of subjugated people” will be released, placing the subject on the road to emancipation and liberation. (Cameron & Gibson, *Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein*, 2005)

By working with individuals to redefine themselves within a diverse context of non-capitalist, post-capitalist identities the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project was able to place artists and artisans “on the road to emancipation and liberation.” While this action is just a beginning and the artists and artisans are a small segment of the community in Franklin County, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project demonstrates another community produced model for expanding the alternate reality of a diverse economy supported by a community economy where the creation of community produced knowledge that empowers communities to not only solve problems, to paraphrase Ian McHarg, but to seek them out and discover

new and creative ways to turn problems into opportunities (The Lost Tapes of Ian McHarg, 2006).

Artists and artisans are central to the creative economy. By incorporating the diverse economies framework in a way that is inclusive of their assets and the full range of work they do, a reality can manifest itself in a way that strengthens communities and enables the realization of new possibilities through a new localized understanding of development and agency.

The Greater Franklin County is often viewed as a region in need. In contrast, we found asset framing to be incredibly powerful on the ground. The needs experienced and expressed by regional artists do not go away, but foregrounding assets opens a window into a new way for artists to think about the work they do—it opens new sources of valuation. By disrupting the over-focus on needs, asset framing opens the door to revalue existing practices that are filled with richness and generosity.

Reframing the economy had similar effects. When the everyday practices of artists and artisans are called economic it moves the economy from an abstract thing that individuals have no control over, to something tangible and actionable. It has micro-political effects. The theme of generosity ran through the diverse economic practices uncovered. The practices provided both an opportunity to validate the creative economic arrangements of the artists (allowing them to see themselves as economic actors), and provided a set of practices that can be a model for other artists and regional developers. The artist and artisan researchers and interviewees creating the data then own the data owned by the artist and artisan

community. It is something can be embraced as endogenously created. The stories the artists and artisans shared become models of possibility.

I was at a political meeting at Greenfield's Coop Market and met Ava [...] and when she learned I was an artist and didn't have [...] studio space, she said, "Oh, we live on this farm and we have all these buildings, and they're not being used, come on down!" So I went down [...] into this wonderful old barn, and I love barns. Anyway I went and [...] I cleaned out a spot where the cows had been and the sheep, and spent quite a bit of time cleaning that out and then brought down all my paintings and set up [...] I discovered the out of doors. And I love being outdoors, that's the other side of me, if I could live in a tree house I would, and so I went outside to paint and I started painting their buildings and their house and their gardens. [...] And when I first exhibited them at McCusker's I was able to thank them, in a sense, for the opportunity. (Deborah Andrews)

Additionally, creating an environment that encouraged folks to discuss their assets, what supports them, opened a space for personal transformation, community building, and the deepening of existing ties.

Jerilyn Kolbin, a researcher who was at first tentative about conducting interviews, discovered that everyone she asked wanted to be interviewed by her. In fact, she did more interviews than were asked for by the project because she enjoyed the process so much and could not refuse other people in her painting group who also wanted to be interviewed.

Researcher Heather Cohen had just returned to the area after living on the West Coast for several years. By participating in the research project, she was able to make new connections to area artists and start exploring different communities and peer groups she might like to associate with. Heather also enlisted a number of her interviewees as performers for a benefit concert she hosted for the Prison Birth Project.

Researchers Cheryl Rezendes and Eric DeLuca, discussed how, through the interview process, they were each able to gain a deeper understanding of their peers, people they interacted with, and created art with for many years, but never had the opportunity to ask questions that delved deeper into how they became artists or how they are surviving as artists.

Our researchers also discussed how the act of interviewing a peer artist or artisan had the effect of giving value to an individual's life experiences and practices. Often the interviewees were thanking the researchers for interviewing them, asking about their lives, and recognizing the work and effort they put into their contributions to the community.

Professor Julie Graham used to advise, "Start where you are." Through the artist and artisan researchers, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project started with the assets that already existed and gifted them with value. From there a transformation occurred from an identity wrought with needs, into an identity of power and agency.

I do spend the money on the materials that I need. I am not going to buy pencils that don't draw the way I want to draw. Or buy them just because they're cheaper. So I really invest in value and in quality. And I think, while at the same time I do that that, there is so much that you don't need to get [buy] to make something. So that is my overall feeling and I care about my work, but I don't ever feel like I am limited by money at all in what I can and can't do based on what I have. Since I know and I feel that there is such an abundance of things, if I financially can't afford them, just thinking outside of that construct, maybe it's \$10 for this tube of paint, it is just another thing to put you into a box. You can't have this unless you have \$10. Well maybe if that's the case, instead of paint I would use mud. And that ends up being more powerful than any \$10 tube of paint that I could use on a painting.
(Fabiola Guiteau)

Inhabiting this identity of agency the researchers had the capacity to induce change within themselves and in the population of peers that they interviewed. And finally, the transformed identity of artists and artisans could then perform that agency in the broader community in which they participate. The artists and artisans, at least temporarily, operated from a changed stance, oriented from an asset-based perspective opening up the space for possibility. It is that asset-based orientation that renders possibility both visible and actionable. By placing value on what the artists and artisans do and who they are, the artists and artisans were able to start seeing themselves as valuable through the asset-based approach and by expanding what is seen as economic. This created an opening for a powerful transformation of community roles for artists and artisans.

Over the course of the project the roles of the co-coordinators changed. Initially we worked to disrupt the prevailing discourse of deficits and provided technical support. As the project developed, our roles as the co-coordinators shifted to holding open the space for possibility that the research community had now filled or was in the process of filling. Shifting from a teaching mode to that of a collaborator was a process of both letting go of any sense of ownership or desired outcome, and fortifying the framework for the opening of possibility so that the researchers could act, move, and perform in that space.

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project uses poststructuralist participatory action research to disrupt the capitalocentric and needs-based development discourse for the creative economy in the Greater Franklin County, MA. We borrow this strategy from Jenny Cameron, Katherine Gibson, Julie Graham

and the Creative Economies Collective. This approach, which uses the disruption to foreground economic diversity and community assets, is a particularly good fit to the creative economy. Much of the economic activity of this sector falls outside of traditional capitalism. Similarly, we found that artists and artisans in the region are motivated by a variety of values—community building, activism, creating and sharing beauty, sustainability, gifting—values which do not always mesh with the capitalocentric development aim of constant growth. In fact, often times when pushed to provide more, to “grow” what the artists and artisans contribute to the community, the delicate balance that allows the artists and artisans to be active community members becomes untenable. While artists do not want to live in poverty, they also do not always see more as better. Through disrupting the capitalocentric needs-based development discourse, a space opened for regional artisans and artists to see themselves as economic agents and to see their work and values as supportive assets—in short it was transformative.

The Quality of Life

First Lady Michelle Obama wrote, “The arts and humanities define who we are as a people. That is their power—to remind us of what we each have to offer, and what we all have in common. To help us understand our history and imagine our future” (Obama, 2012). However, many of the advocates of economic development within the creative economy utilize a capitalocentric discourse driven by a fixed vision of what constitutes an economy as used by the New England Foundation for the Arts in their document, *The Creative Economy: A New Definition*.

All of these efforts reflect NEFA’s goal to update New England’s creative economy data and analysis using a more consistent framework focused on

the production and distribution of cultural goods and services, and to collaborate with others engaging in this research on the local, state, regional, national and international levels. Our creative economy model purposefully upholds a conservative definition of the standard, U.S. federal data categories that should be used as a foundation for research, while allowing for local refinement and adjustment to these categories to account for local geographic differences and advocacy purposes. (DeNatale & Wassall, 2007)

By utilizing a standardized definition of economy to define success, the solutions to problems emerge in a standardized capitalocentric export-base epistemology driven by a needs-based approach. The apparent solution to identified needs is to fortify capitalism in order to address absences.

In order to meet this goal, [the Fostering Art and Culture Project] is working to design and implement a marketing strategy that will help to improve the income of local artists and performers by targeting new audiences for their products, as well as to enhance the image of the region as a center for creative industry development. This will help to improve the quality of life for residents. In order to achieve these goals, emphasis will be placed on attracting outside dollars into the region by targeting both day trippers and overnight visitors, as well as those interested in purchasing art produced in Franklin County through ecommerce. (Pappas, Fostering the Arts and Culture 5 Hub Marketing Plan, 2010)

Clearly, for certain segments of the creative economy, increasing exchange within a market system can increase artists and artisans' ability to address needs such as healthcare, housing, etc. However, for a rural region without easy access to capital, funding diverted for marketing tourism often must come from existing allocations, such as employee wages, or are garnered through often unpredictable grant cycles. The actual increase in earnings for individual artists may be small. Alternatively, utilizing an asset-based approach to a diverse economy, where a definition of economy is inclusive of non-capitalist practices, and utilizing that as a starting point (rather than as an afterthought or counterpoint) we can begin to shape the quality of life for the people we want to impact with resources that are already present.

While some of the aspects of quality of life can be addressed through capitalist practices, the non-capitalist practices of the diverse economy are just as, if not more, important and valuable for sustaining the quality of life that artists and artisans are seeking.

She has a cooperative gallery, that's how I learned about her, and I started working here. [...] Just about the time I was trying to figure out where I was going, her mom developed a serious medical issue so she could no longer work in the gallery. So we came to an agreement. When I am there I cover the gallery, I answer the phone, I help customers as they come in, and I make things for her that she needs for her work. In other words, it takes away some pressure and that's the way it worked out. We work collaboratively with developing glazes with colors and our work is very different so it has been a really nice working relationship that is mutually beneficial to both of us. I am not paying a fee to work there, but I am working in lieu of paying a fee. It is helping me because I am learning a lot of things about areas of clay work that I really don't have much experience with. (Jeanne Douillard)

Jeanne has found an arrangement that utilizes her assets, she is a vivacious wonderful people person with a lot of experience in gallery sales and working in collaborative studios, and this enables her access to a studio within her limited monetary means. Her partner gains a gallery and studio assistant in lieu of her ailing mother, and both of them are able to continue a creative practice.

Embracing Diversity

Karen, one of our interviewees, talked about how people of varying incomes seem less segregated than she has experienced elsewhere (what she calls “higher economic situations” and “lower”). This desegregation enables the possibility of a relationship between the producer (artist) and appropriator (patron/collector), and the possible redistribution of assets that can occur.

I think what I really love about being out here is that there is a really strong sense of community between people of higher economic situations and lower. I don't feel like it is segregated at all like it is in other places where I

have been. So I feel like people of different backgrounds, especially economic backgrounds, all seem to mix together out here over cultural connections [...].
(Karen Ducey)

It is through the cultural connections that break down the segregation so that diversity can be experienced, rather than just perceived. This diversity is an asset that is clearly utilized in noncapitalist exchanges, where a patron with excess assets might gift space (an underutilized barn, for example) to a painter who possesses no such resources. Such exchanges enable a redistribution of wealth or assets garnered from a primarily capitalist economy, to a noncapitalist mode, albeit temporarily, that otherwise might not exist.

A diverse economy is recognized as an asset, often subconsciously or implicitly (rather than consciously or explicitly), by many in Franklin County who purposefully choose to live in the region in order to balance issues of quality of life with potentially fewer or lower paying sources of income from capitalist exchange.

I don't feel the people around here are bursting at the seams with all kinds of money, but I do not feel like this is an impoverished area because I don't think that I am unique in the sense that I grow my own food, I barter and trade for things, I save scraps of material for projects and things, and I think that this region is very rich with resources and resourceful people. They do anything and everything they can to live very fulfilled lives even if it is not monetary fulfillment. (Karen Ducey)

For Karen, who very consciously engages in diverse economic practices that prioritize non-capitalist production and exchange, the community economy enables her to exist outside of the stigmatism and lack of agency that she might otherwise be placed in if she were valued solely on her annual income or material assets.

Within the rural environment of Franklin County, a community economy is not a panacea. Clearly, there are challenges and needs that can be difficult to address

solely through the community economy. When the relationships that generate exchange within the community economy break down, particularly in a rural region where distance and isolation can accentuate the loss or absence of a service or need, the delicate balance that many of our artists and artisans are treading between agency and a lack of agency, or subsistence and a more dire poverty, can be easily upset. Nevertheless, the fact that the balance is fragile or imperfect does not negate the positive impacts that most certainly alter the life circumstances of artists and artisans. The challenges that emerge from a community economy need to be examined as grounds for possibility, just as incipient with flaws, imperfections, bounty, and capacity as a capitalist system. Only, in a postcapitalist framing, the community economy has a greater capacity of possibility than in the capitalist economy, primarily because policy and practice have not yet fully embraced its existence and potential.

Revealing the Unknown

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project proposes that utilizing a performative approach where artists and artisans are the source of knowledge for factors that impact their quality of life, and the source of solutions to their economic challenges, can raise the awareness of creative approaches to a diverse community economy and create better pathways to development of the creative economy than standard export-base economic practices. By raising the profile of artists' contribution to the economic sustainability of the region, we can better value the endogenous assets already present in the region¹. By strengthening assets, like Carla's self-provisioning and barter networks, communities can generate a greater

return on an investment that directly impacts people, rather than hiring a firm to modestly increase tourism through a campaign targeting international travellers. We can also begin to reimagine an alternative way of surveying an economic landscape and creating economic development plans that serve to subvert and invert the paradigm so that non-capitalist and alternative capitalist practices are primary, and capitalist practices are relegated as secondary less successful options for improving the quality of life for individuals and communities². At the core of a community economy is redefining a purpose of any economy as an inclusive system that seeks to improve the quality of life for all people, and to do that, communities need to reappropriate how development efforts and funding are distributed and theorized (Graham, 2008).

When asked, in one of the initial training exercises, to define an economy, our artist and artisan researchers spoke predictably of stock markets, commodity speculation, and a disconnection of an economy to the actual lived lives of most people. But, once we reframed the question with the concept of a community economy utilizing Gibson-Graham's iceberg diagram, demonstrating how a clock can be utilized to inventory the work contained within a day, and collaboratively defining what qualified as work, what was a thing of value, and mapping individual and group assets, the concept then felt like common sense, like something our artists and artisans were already intuitively engaged in.

I think the best reading of success [... is], do I have a really interesting life that sustains itself? Yes. (Lynn Peterbrend)

Lynn's measure of success allows her to step outside of a predetermined vision of success. It is a measure that prioritizes a vision of life that is less tied to hierarchy,

prestige, or revenue, and more intrinsically linked to exploration and creativity. Certainly, Lynn is concerned with generating income from her work as a printmaker, but she is aware of maintaining a sustainable balance between her ultimate goals, and what she needs to generate to afford rent and her other basic needs.

Different realities are being performed constantly all around us. By recognizing the action and actors, how we are participating as passive or active subjects, and that there are reliable and unreliable narrators, these realities are drawn into focus and begin to take form. We can become literate participants rather than passive observers.

Notes

1. Sustainability in this context is created by economic practices that express conservation and reuse of resources, which for artists may originate from limited access to capital, but also emerges from an ethic that usurps profit for creative expression and the ability to maintain that creative expression even with limited resources.
2. We can see some of these techniques in action with the hybrid research collectives occurring in Mindanao and Australia (Gibson-Graham, Roelvink, 2009).

CHAPTER 5

10 CASE STUDIES

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project's research team completed a total of 132 interviews, primarily from Franklin County, but also extending into the rest of Western and Central Massachusetts, as well as Southern New Hampshire and Vermont. 33.3 percent of the interviewees identified as male, 56.8 percent as female, and the remaining interviewees identified as multiple genders, other, or chose not to disclose. Franklin County identifies as 48.3 percent male and 51.7 percent female (United States Census Bureau, 2015). 69 percent of the interviewees identified as heterosexual, 9 percent as gay or lesbian, 4.5 percent as bisexual, 3.8 percent as other, and 13 percent chose not to identify. The interviewees were 73 percent white, 4 percent black or African American, 1.5 percent Asian American or Pacific Islander, 1.5 percent as Latino/a, .76 percent as Native American or Alaska Native, 3.8 percent identified as multiple identities, 7.6 percent as other, and the remaining were unassigned. Franklin County is 91.5 percent white, 3.8 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1.4 percent black or African American, 1.5 percent Asian, and 2 percent two or more races (United States Census Bureau, 2015). The interviewees ranged from 25 years old to a self disclosed top age of 84 years. The interviewees tended to be highly educated with 34 percent with a graduate degree, 35.6 percent with a bachelor's degree, 6 percent with an associate's degree, and 10.6 percent having at least some college course work. 12.1 percent did not disclose their educational attainment. With 69.7 percent of interviewees having a bachelor's degree or higher,

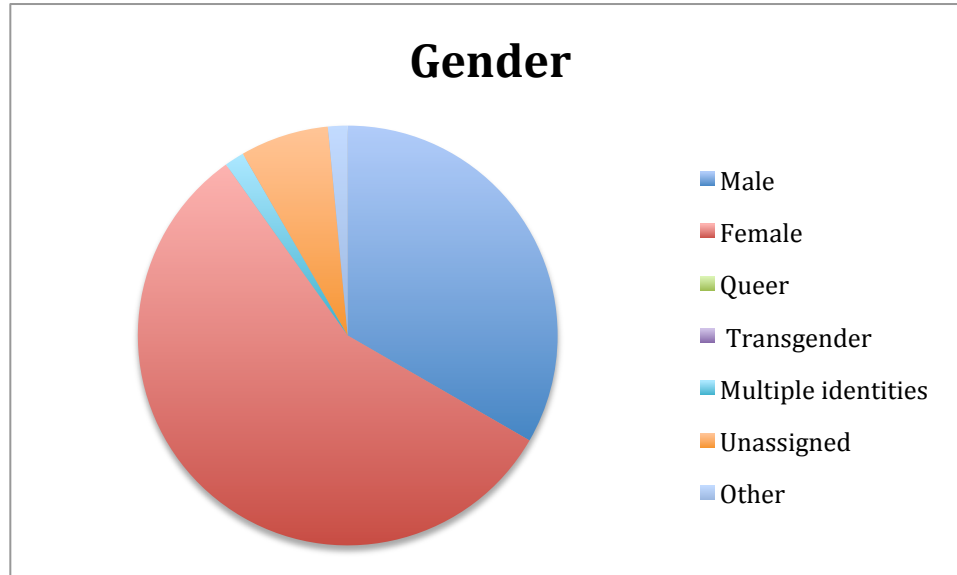


Figure 6: Gender

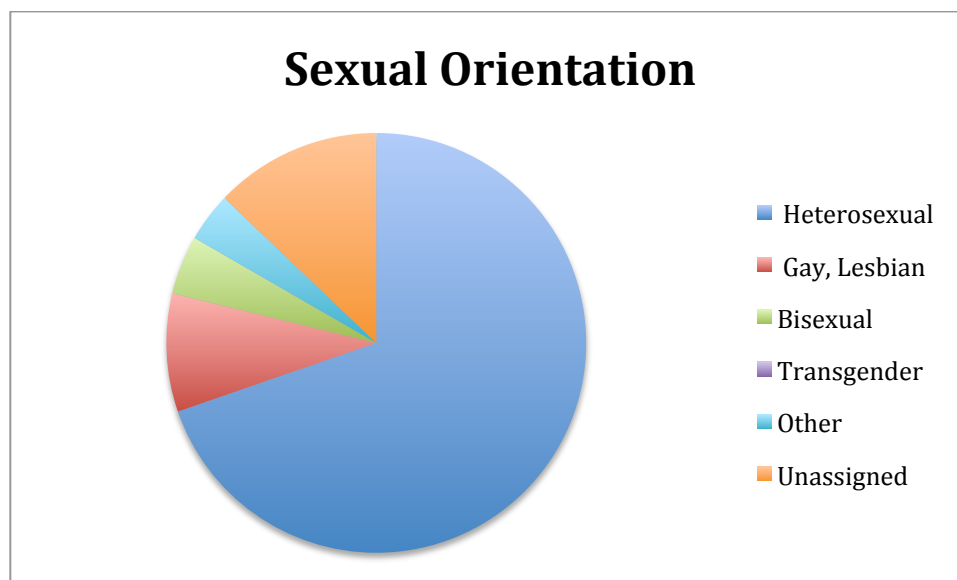


Figure 7: Sexual Orientation

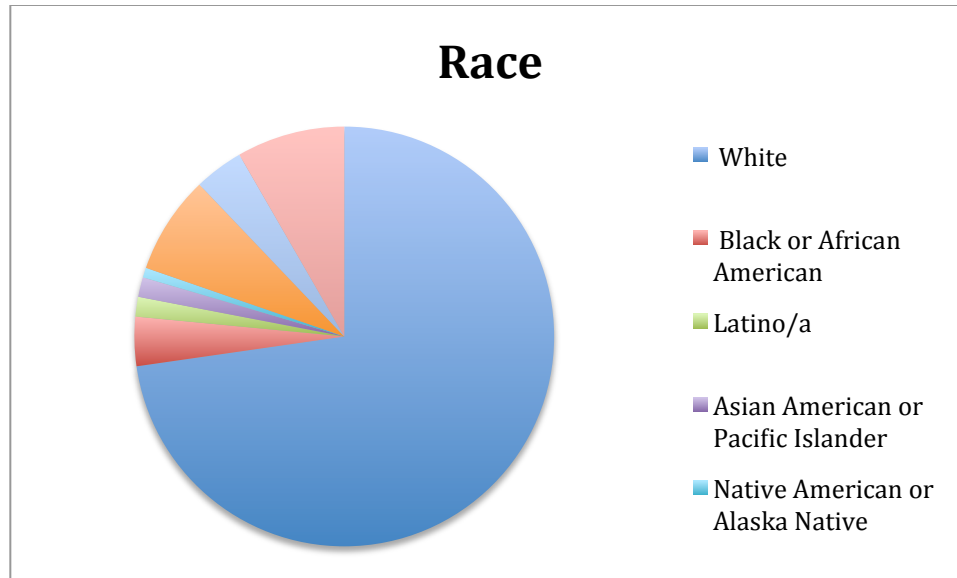


Figure 8: Race

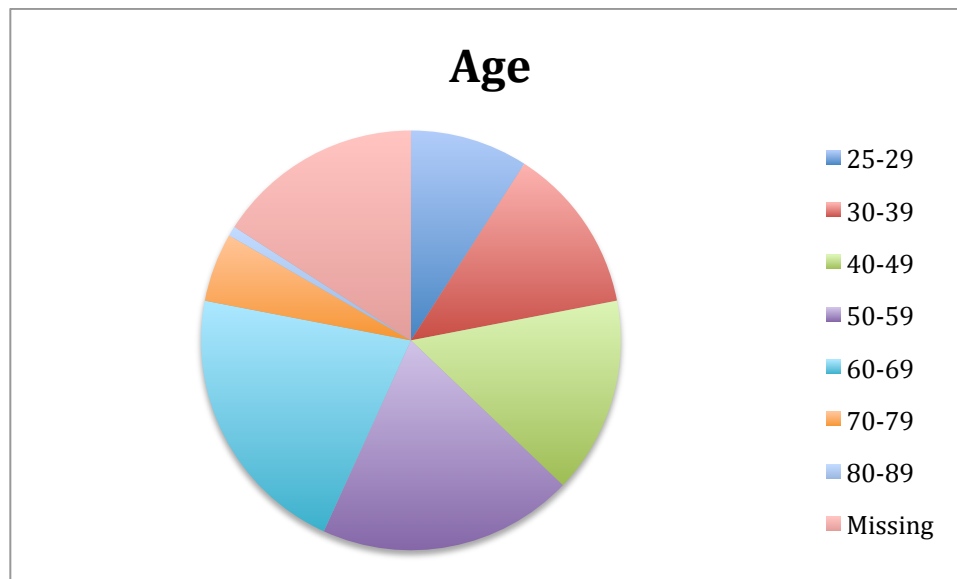


Figure 9: Age

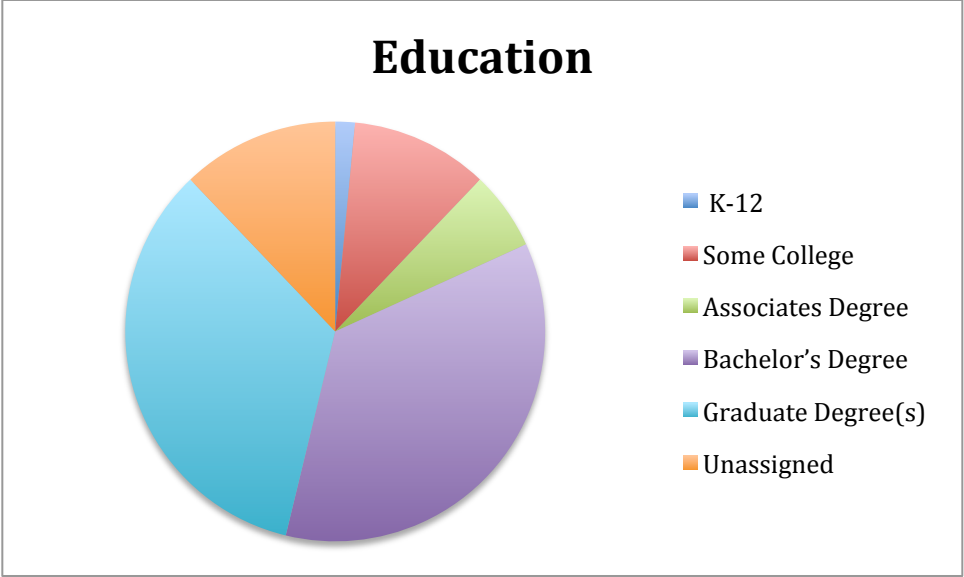


Figure 10: Education

Will Roberts

Will seems to have intuitively been drawn to story telling and music since the second grade when he tried writing his first novel, which ended up being a page and a half, and started playing with his sister's open tuned guitar. While Will had a career teaching English and storytelling, and now is an established writer, he began storytelling when he was a lifeguard on the Jersey Shore.

I'd have all these little kids on the beach, and you know little kids like to cluster around the lifeguard stand. Little kids and their mothers love to cluster around the lifeguard stand. There'd be lots of rainy days when I would turn the lifeguard stand over and cover it with towels to make a tent and little kids would be under there with me and I'd tell them stories. That was really sort of the beginning of any structured storytelling that I did.

Even as a teen on the Jersey Shore Will was thinking creatively and sharing his talents with the community of children on the beach. In a manner that seems part camp counselor, part older sibling, and part caregiver, he took it on himself to keep rain-bedraggled children entertained.

After college in 1962, Will found a job teaching English in upstate New York and moved out into the country where he and his wife could sit on the porch and play music. It was there on the porch that he had a chance encounter with a storyteller who introduced him to the folklore tradition of Jack Tales, and then to Ray Hicks, a master storyteller who would become Will's mentor until Ray died in 2003.

Storytelling, traditional storytelling when I learned it and participated in it, was rooted in the community. It was part of communal life in the Appalachians in North Carolina in 1962 when I first encountered it, and it kind of remained that way itself because of Ray. He was the kind of guy that lived on his farm and would tell stories to anybody that would come by. He wouldn't shut up. One time I remember when we were camping on my land down there he came by at 9:00 in the morning to make sure we got our fire

going all right and he didn't shut up until 2:00 the next morning. We ended up going to his house and I have hours and hours of videotape of him from that particular time. It [storytelling] was part of his life and it was integral to the way he lived and the way of the people in the community around him. They would come to him to hear stories.

For Will there is a sanctity in the folklore tradition. While there has been an increase in awareness of storytelling and the folk arts, Will often finds the commodification of the tradition as demeaning or contrived. When storytelling is transformed into a festival event it loses its original community function. When traditional folk arts become mass-produced (in the small scale of a folk artist), the work loses its unique authenticity of origin.

They're sometimes called naïve artists or folk artists, but what they really are, artists that work in isolation and for a long time that's what was meant by folk art. But you're right there is this sort of secondary or tertiary group of people who try to mass produce things they can sell in tourist visiting stations and things of that sort. I don't know where in the hell that comes from other than the impulse to make money.

There is a tension between wanting to sustain and strengthen the folk arts traditions (Will used to teach folklore to students at Greenfield Community College), and a fear about losing the authenticity that makes it something special to a specific community.

[...] Greenfield is one of the centers of contra dancing in the whole country and people come from all over to come contra dancing. I told to you that I was talking to the officials about a way the town can encourage that growth and benefit from it in a sense. On the other hand, I think if that happened, would it become institutionalized? Would it become institutionalized and then would it become a rigid form that loses the spontaneity and its creativity?

Even with Will's misgivings about commercializing or commodifying the folk arts, he feels there are appropriate ways to raise awareness and strengthen the art.

We used to do this folk fest when I taught at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. I was there for three years. Each summer I'd put on what I called the Beech Mountain Festival of Folk Arts and I'd bring people in, not professional musicians, but local area musicians and storytellers, and so on, and craftspeople. Any money that we made went to the local fire people. The last year we did it I stopped at Doc Watson's house and I told him what we were doing and asked would he be willing to come up and play at the folk festival? He said sure. He came up and played for an hour on stage and spent the rest of the time backstage with any students that wanted to jam with him.

Will created a framework that strengthened the folk arts traditions in a way that felt authentic and respectful for him and his folk artist community in North Carolina.

Rather than ignoring the local talent in order to create a larger scale event, Will focused on the local community and the wealth of talent that already existed in the region.

A sense of place has also been important throughout Will's life. He draws inspiration from the people and places around him and that allows his writing and storytelling to remain rooted within a place-based tradition.

I get a lot of inspiration from place. I get inspiration from stories from other people. My mother-in-law [...] was telling me about going, there's a place in New London, NH called the Quaking Bog, [...] she had been there a few years ago with a friend of hers. She was sitting on a rock ledge towards the highway that overlooks the bog and five or six wolves came in that day. The male, the alpha male, just stopped and turned and looked at her and then they ran off. I said, I've got to use that. [...] There's just no way I could not have used that. I just wrote that part today. [I get inspiration from] things people tell me, the drunk outside the store, things that happen politically in the town or in the state. I think my work has gotten increasingly grounded because of that.

In addition to listening to the people and places around him, Will is also conscious of performing a kind of dialogue with his audience and creating a connection.

Sometimes this connection is immediate and direct when he is teaching, storytelling,

or performing music, and other times the conversation happens from a distance with his writing.

I like having an audience, whether it's telling stories and interacting with people in that way and seeing them participate in the storytelling, or whether it's doing music and just sort of entertaining people and entertaining myself in the process, or whether it's writing just hoping people are reading what I've written and thinking about it. I think with the writing more than anything else. If they're reading it and thinking about the issues it raises in terms of faith, in terms of relationships, in terms of political themes that are in my work and [...] thinking about it and maybe even changing their iron bound prejudices in some way. That's the more important aspect of it for me, at least in terms of seeking an audience.

Now retired from a career of teaching, but more active than ever with his storytelling, writing, and music, Will is still dedicated to his local community and figuring out ways to communicate his vision, his artisan ethics, through his work. Whether it was as a life guard sheltering kids from the rain, teaching community college students how to write and tell stories, performing at community open microphone events, or through his novels, Will has committed himself to shaping a world that he wants to live in. He has been performing his vision of being a folk artist, or as he would call it, a tradesman.

The creativity of performing the community economy is in the recognition of the linkages of interconnectivity as assets, and it is through the interconnectivity of relationships that the value of these assets can increase. For Will Roberts, story teller, musician, and writer, there is a sense of folk stories as belonging to the commons of shared knowledge, but also belonging to an ancient tradition of "open source" editing, where each contributor, each user of the story and make it stronger.

[...] the folk artist is someone who recreates a traditional piece and filters it through their own sensibility, and their own intelligence, and lets it come out the other side as something that is faithful to [...] the tradition but maybe

even adds, changes it some way, and then you give it to somebody else and they change it in some way and you don't own it any more. They own it.

For Will, the storyteller's tradition is constantly evolving, but it is dependent on interconnectivity, not only with an audience, but with an audience of other storytellers who can utilize a the knowledge commons resource, claim ownership of that resource, and then return it back to the knowledge commons, whereby the knowledge commons increases, the variations of a story increases, the capacity to communicate with people from varying locations and backgrounds increases.

I have this one granddaughter, who when I tell a story she participates in the telling of it. She'll say, "They did this." And I'll say, "How did you know that?" And she'll just laugh and she'll say, "That's what they did, Bob, or they did this." I'll say, "You're absolutely right. And do you know what they did after that?" And she'll say, "What?" I'll begin to tell her and she'll say, "Maybe they did the other thing." So that it ends up with both of us creating the story and that's a totally different kind of audience experience that's really fun. In aural storytelling it's really important with kids to encourage them to become part of the story.

Building from assets is a fortifying action, one that calls upon individuals to work within expanding circles of radii encompassing greater definitions of community. The closeness of an immediate family grows to encompass all the actors who are upholding an environment. For an alternate environment to exist, to be hewn out of the capitalocentric space, the actors need to be recognized and nurtured. What is beyond the capitalocentric experience, beyond its capacity for empathy, is a richness filled by diverse activities of community building.

Moonlight Davis

Inhabiting the diverse space of a community economy, are people like Moonlight Davis, one of our researchers, who was able to perform an alternate reality in the small downtown of Millers Falls, a former tool manufacturing community whose village center intersection in 2015 was designated as a slum and blight area (Curtis, 2015)¹. Moonlight is a talented musician and photographer and, at the time of the research project, the proprietor of the Faces and Places Gallery. He is an African American man who grew up in Millers Falls and traveled around the country before returning to Millers Falls.

Moonlight, like many of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project's interviewees, has a complex relationship with his artistic pursuits and the resources to maintain stability in his life. He is incredibly active with all of his work, particularly performing as a musician, but as an older man who recently received his college degree, he finds his options limited.

I have no home, I still rent. I have no money in the bank, I haven't saved anything. I have a college education and I don't know what to do with it. At 64 years old, I don't know who will hire me. And I'm just trying to say, both to myself and to everyone else around me, that I'm worth something, that I am actually worth something. And people gotta hear that.

By one measure, Moonlight's life has been filled with challenges, encounters with the judicial system that at various times incarcerated Moonlight and several of his children, and his struggle with racial biases in Millers Falls and elsewhere.

So if you want to know who I was before I went to college, [...] I was Mr. Everything. I was a bank teller; I was a janitor; I was a welfare counselor, I had a caseload; I drove tractor-trailers; I ran drugs, I was available to try and

make money. And for a long time, I made money without a formal education, because I was willing to be resilient in whatever it was I did.

Moonlight's resilience eventually led to his return to Western Massachusetts with the goal of trying to make his life better. He remarried and performs regularly with his wife Morning Star, he did some "men's work" about recognizing who he was, graduated from Greenfield Community College, and then went on graduate from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. While Moonlight continues to face challenges, he also has a remarkable well of inner strength that helps him attain his personal goals, but also feeds his passion for community building.

While finishing his bachelor's degree at the University, Moonlight was introduced to the idea of an art gallery as a community focal point.

My last semester, one of my classes was with Anne Ciecko. She teaches a class that incorporates arts and the community. [...] I wrote a grant for \$300, I had a show at UMass that I got 30 local artists from campus to submit work, and we held a showing at the Malcolm X Gallery [...].

This community experiment propelled him to do another gallery show at the University, and then a gallery show in an empty storefront in his home village of Millers Falls. The show in Millers Falls imbued Moonlight with a mission after one of the show visitors was so moved by the impact within the community that "this community needs you."

[A] lot of the local people came in, and some man who was sort of ignorant cried, because he had never been to any kind of a gallery before in his life. None. So that sort of changed me some, and so after that, [another visitor] said, "This community needs you, Moonlight. This community needs you to do what you do right here, right on this corner. Don't quit it." And I said, "But I don't have no money to keep this up." And she said, "Don't worry about it. I'll cover you for a few months."

Moonlight's vision of the community he lives in and wants to live in was infectious and impacted one resident so much that she ended up being Moonlight's patron helping support the endeavor by paying rent for the storefront for a year and covering utility bills when the gallery was not generating enough income. After that initial year, Moonlight was able to establish the gallery in the community, and create other avenues of community building income generation, to maintain the rent and utilities. Through his musician connections, Moonlight was able to produce a concert by Charles Neville, and later two concerts by a Cuban ensemble, both of generated great ticket sales that helped support the gallery while also bringing diversity to the cultural events in Millers Falls.

Moonlight also talked about the role of the gallery as a community gathering space. He welcomed community members coming in and talking about their problems and dreams, and he saw the gallery as a way to give something back to the community he grew up in.

[Moonlight's patron] said, most of it is because of my charisma, my people capital, my communicational capital, has turned all these people that hated me or didn't like me or didn't understand me, turned them around so that we have a relationship now, all of us. Sometimes it's sort of touchy, but it's a relationship. And I think this is what this woman was trying to say to me. The place didn't have any culture, any class, and the only thing that they were good for, most of them, was going in the bar, bending their elbow drinking [...].

So the out front business is the grocery store, the barber shop, the gallery, that's the out front. The inside is the charisma of the person that is in the guts of it that you can come in and feel warm and comfortable and fuzzy with. Someone that you feel that is human enough that you can [connect with]. You don't have to buy anything. You can just come in and talk. Be out of the cold.

In addition to the immediate impact of opening a gallery in a slum or blight designated area that could also serve as a community meeting area, Moonlight also worked to bring together the various village establishments to help share in his vision.

[...] I'm taking my gallery and saying to the library, to the bar, to the brewery, to the community, "Is there some kind of workable way that we could communicate and work together and build the community up?" That's what I'm trying to do.

Moonlight's vision is not without substantial obstacles. As an African American man in a county that is predominantly white, he has faced bias and prejudice, and economic and social difficulties and injustices that continue to create substantial challenges, including the eventual closing of the Faces and Places Gallery.



Figure 11: Moonlight in the Faces and Places Gallery

In contrast to a lifetime of challenges, Moonlight continues to pursue possibility and exudes a kind demeanor that is disarming. He greets people he knows with a deep hug and a rich sonorous voice, but he also admits to being tired.

So if you say, “Jesus, Moonlight, I’m really glad that I see you just constantly going.” It’s because, in the back of my head, I keep asking the question. I don’t have a mom. I’ve never had a dad. I don’t have a rich uncle that would give me any money, or an aunt. I don’t believe I have anyone that cares about me unless I present the need for someone to care about me in the first place. This is all part of being an artist. Everything that you’re writing down is a part of this artist being an artist. And it relates back to what you wanted in the first place. What resources are in the community? Well, I’ll tell you, there’s a lot of resources in the community. But if you don’t go out looking for them, they don’t come to you and say, “Hey, I want to help you!” They don’t come do that. So what do you do? You go out and you find them and you say, “You want to help me, don’t you? Come on, help me.”

Despite the hardships Moonlight has endured, he continues to persevere with an openhearted approach to serving his community and his vision of humanity through his music, photography, and his interactions with people in a broad community that extends beyond Millers Falls. His experiences add to the community generated knowledge about what is possible in Franklin County while also injecting a voice that speaks up about racism, a steadfast resolution to not be forgotten or taken for granted, and blend of secular and religious perspectives. Moonlight continues define his own narratives within a diverse context of non-capitalist, post-capitalist, poststructural identities where the intersectional contradictions are embraced or discarded, and everything is an experience that can be learned from

Fabiola Guiteau

Fabiola is a Haitian American dancer, painter, jeweler, and activist, who seek to empower people who have experienced social or economic disparity. As a child, she was encouraged to use self-expression as a valid medium by her artist father, and even now Fabiola expresses how play impacts her creation of art and how what emerges is a confluence of place, time, environment, peers, and education. Her muse draws from the challenges in her life, love, and her interactions with others.

I like to express myself in dance [...]. I used to do a lot [of] painting on canvas or found objects, and then a little bit of sewing, jewelry making, knitting, crafts in general. I really feel like I fell into everything, like there really was not a conscious decision or a conscious choice that I'm going to use this medium [....] I kind of just started playing with things and realized that either acrylics would work for me at the time, or knitting, or cooking, or sewing, or dancing....

Part of Fabiola's flexibility as an artist emanates from her upbringing, particularly her father's influence, which she calls her "inheritance." He is not currently practicing as an artist, but is a carpenter, which Fabiola labels as his, "more technical form of art and expression."

Fabiola's inspiration also emanates from family, translating her life experiences, and trying to express that in seemingly contradictory intimate and superficial ways. At the core of her work seems to be love.

[...] overall I just think the theme has been love and defining love. [Finding ways] that manifest love and express that. I think that is a huge muse in my life and in my spirituality and self-reflection.

In addition to her translation of self, Fabiola has a deep-seated sense of spirituality as a core element of exploration.

I feel like spirituality is such a present thing in our lives. Often we are so disconnected from it because we are physical beings. The spiritual realm, or essence of who we are and what makes life, is hard to make a connection to. But for my entire life, ever since being a child looking at myself in the mirror, touching my face and saying, "What is this?" Ever since I have been a child I have had such a strong connection to my spirit and the spirit world, and God. For me it is very much an underlying point or aspect of my life and I think that is normal.

Fabiola's connection to the spiritual world is a way that she connects her sense of self, the self defined by family, her cumulative life experiences, and her exploration of love, to the something beyond the literal and concrete, what she calls, the "essence of who we are and what makes life."

Fabiola's childhood is tightly woven with the Haitian experience of the early 1990s, a time of much turmoil and upheaval. She emigrated from Haiti during a time of social unrest, violence, and fear, and that is retained in her childhood memories and the family connections and traditions of Haitian culture that were retained. By trying to integrate a sense of spirituality and self-awareness into her work through an awareness of internal and external landscapes Fabiola works to illustrate how they are connected at points, and disconnected at others.

My family and I immigrated to the States in the early 90s, and that is when the coup d'état and a lot of the social reforms and wars were happening in Haiti. I was about four or five, maybe, still very young. Some of my first memories are of my mom shoving us underneath the bed because there were officers coming and people were dying in the entire block. They were raping children and burning down houses. So even though I was very young, there is a strong consciousness... and a strong connection to trees, little things in [our] backyard I was very young but the memories are very strong.

In spite of these frightening early memories, or perhaps because of them, Fabiola's very strong vivid memories of her childhood that have carried into her adult identity. It has persisted throughout her experience as a traveller and immigrant.

I think there is nothing I can do to get Haiti out of me. I feel like the American and European cultures, I guess it depends on how strong of a background you have to a cultural identity, but I feel like a lot of friends that I have that are American, even though they may be Italian-American [for example], a lot of that culture and a lot of that ancestry has been washed away. But being first generation, you walk into my house and you're in Haiti. We were in the States, but we spoke Creole at home and we ate traditional foods, and a lot of my cousins, uncles, and aunts were in the area so I had that strong influence in my life even though I was outside of Haiti. But, I feel like the Haitian culture is such a strong culture, the ancestry, the history, and traditions, they will not go away, even after years. The essence of the people, the struggle and the suffering, all of that is completely embedded in me and who I am.

As a first generation immigrant from a family with deep cultural roots, she has been able to retain aspects of Haitian culture in a visceral way opposed to the “washed away” heritage that that she sometimes sees in some of her peers. For Fabiola, there is both the strong familial connection reinforced in the day-to-day lived experiences, and also the historical and cultural legacies of the collective Haitian experience.

Fabiola lived in San Francisco while she studied fashion design while simultaneously showing paintings in galleries and making clothes on consignment. She views this period as a time when she was “living as an artist” and really enjoyed it, but she also felt she “did not have the maturity and connection to spirituality” that she has now. She ended up traveling to, and staying in Brazil for a period of time and there she found a different utility for her art, where it became her primary source for income.

It wasn't just expression for fun—I'll drop this off at a consignment shop and if it sells, it sells. [I needed to] merge these two realities, the financial necessity, and the spiritual necessity to create and express emotions, and do both of them simultaneously while still feeling like what I was making was satisfying spiritually and something I could sell. That was huge for me. It was really interesting for me to find ways of expressing myself superficially and [become] more adept at working with other people and their ideas [...]. When I was there I was doing a little bit of graphic design and painting in a couple of different galleries and piecing together my living.

Unlike her experience as a student in San Francisco, Brazil seemed to be a transformative moment where her art and craft needed to be altered to suit a particular need or market. What Fabiola calls expressing herself “superficially” does not seem necessarily negative in connotation. She was still able to utilize her skills in art and craft as a form of expression, her “spiritual necessity,” while also recognizing that what people were purchasing, and thereby supporting her livelihood, was a collaboration between herself and her audience.

Fabiola looks to her experience in Brazil as a possible model to emulate in Holyoke, but she has additional necessities to fulfill as well.

I am trying to get back to a place where I can get some things into a consignment shop and somehow piece together [a livelihood] like I did in Brazil, but [in a] much less stressful [way]. [...] I feel like the medium in which I am creating right now is trying to be more nurturing toward myself and others, and I have to do that before I can get back into the more commercial art and [do that while] still hold[ing] onto this aspect of spirituality. And this is profound, to [feel] I’ve tapped into [both] at the same time [...] and] to have that expression translate into commercial sense.

This is perhaps a part of the spiritual “maturity” that Fabiola alludes to earlier. She is very conscientious that she has multiple bottom lines. Not only is she interested in commercial success, but she is also prioritizing the spiritual sense of “nurturing” her self and others in her community. This appears to be key to Fabiola’s current transition as she seeks to find and ferment community in Holyoke. She is working at this by focusing on conceptual art that is a kind of meditative practice “so there will be less thinking and less doubt and I will be more sure of what I am making.” What Fabiola is calling “meditation and channeling” is a kind rigor for her art practice that is setting the groundwork for what will emerge.

When asked about her ideal art-making environment, Fabiola described what seemed like a very concrete idealized studio, “I think ideally a nice room someplace warm, quiet, [close to] nature.” But she went on to refine that vision as a conceptual space.

After traveling and making jewelry on the road, I kind of can make anything anywhere, so I think it would be important for me to have this environment, not necessarily outside of myself, but at least inside myself. I don’t have any real requirements of what I need. Of course I need to have the space and the tools and the resources to make things happen, but I kind of feel like the space in the setting is an illusion [...] and that what I need to create is really on the inside of me, and I am working more on that. So where I am, it doesn’t really matter.

This is also a part of the spiritual “maturing.” In Brazil she did not have that same sense and instead she, and the community of artists that she lived and worked with, each had particular ways or necessities they needed to feel like they could be creative. In Fabiola’s current state, she has a much more fluid sense of place where her relationships between location and community are consciously constructed and this allows her a sense of agency about constructing instead of finding a sense of place that is conducive to her needs.

So there were tons of artists and musicians and everyone had their particular ways that would [work]. It was only in the morning when I could play my guitar. No, I have to smoke before I do it. Yes, there has to be tea involved. So, to see all those things and deal with all those things just really made me realize that the places are in my head.

Fabiola’s experiences of embracing a superficial sense of need, a feeling that creativity would only emerge in the right circumstances with the right artifacts, in hindsight, helped her recognize that what was more important was an internal landscape that was ready for creativity, that if she could focus on making sure her spiritual landscape was tended to, then the external environment was less

important or dependent on specific conditions or patterns. In addition, Fabiola's heritage, arriving in this country with the loss of a homeland, perhaps has given her alternative ways of looking at place and the importance of place to one's identity and sense of self.

In addition to the internal spiritual landscape, another large source of Fabiola's art has been her interactions and collaborations with others. In Brazil, when she lived in a hostel filled with artists she found several people to collaborate with making art, clothing, dance, and cooking. "So collaborative work is something I am really interested in. I'd love you to make the nose, and I'll make the lips, and [we'll] have this person or thing [emerge] at the end. To me [it] was really awesome." One of Fabiola's more formal collaborations was an internship doing art education with children. Together they worked to deconstruct race and stereotypes through an art lens.

We [...] got to do a lot of work with space and social perception. The kids were working on the idea of a black bull being the one that is bad and all the other colors, like white are good, the ideas of race and culture. We ended up doing a lot of figurines of their own bulls or their characters. [They picked a representation of themselves as] an animal and would create it out of cardboard boxes or recycled materials, and basically they were constructing themselves. [...We helped] them to come up with and use the materials [...]. You know, you can find this at your house in the recycling and, use this coloring to create this identity for yourselves outside of this folklore [or stereotype]. It was really interesting, [...] they could build their identity and know that not only can I create something, not just on the physical realm like this pretty character, but I am [also] empowering myself based on what I am like and what I am and where I come from socially and economically [...]. And then, when they created their bull [or animal], we danced on the streets. It was so awesome and we collaborated with a mariachi band that I played with. A lot of the guys there collaborated with George who was our coordinator for the entire event and he put together some nursery rhyme things with music and we did that during Carnival, which was really cool. So, while everyone else was out drinking and dancing, it was us with the little

kids and these nursery rhymes about empowering yourself, and it was really great.

Fabiola and her collaborators were able to work with the children to learn about stereotypes and deconstruct them in an applied way. Through art they were able to transform metaphor into something tangible that could run counter to social expectations or norms and it was done in a celebratory way.

A lot of the children were embarrassed with the idea of being an animal. It is not looked upon as being a high thing, especially a bull or a monkey. So it was interesting to see that these kids were becoming more and more uninhibited in their sense of expression, what they saw, and the colors that they liked [for example] guys wanting to use pink... and it was interesting to see that transformation and [see them] just letting go of some of these stigmas of what is bad and what is good and what is feminine and what is masculine. [...S]ome of the children were really shy, and through dancing or acting like an animal a lot of that was just shed off.

By embodying animal representations of themselves, the children were able to transcend the social norms and stereotypes and become truer representations of who they were. When Fabiola referenced expressing love, working to improve the environment or the community, she was not drawing from an idealized sense of civic engagement, but recalling the actual work she did with children in Brazil.

Fabiola's sense of community development, like the children she worked with, moves beyond a particular stereotype or self defined categorization.

I really just want to work with people who are disempowered. When I was younger I felt like it had to be a black community, and I think that is just all crap. We are all people, and everybody has been hurt, and everyone has been disempowered. Even if you were the richest person in the world, [there] must have been something in your life, nobody's perfect. We all go through different struggles and different emotional times and [have] psychological things that hold us back. Especially now, walking into a room my race, my color, none of that means anything to me, and I think because it doesn't, I think people react to me differently. Even if you were to have some sort of prejudice against my hair or how I stand or what I say, I am comfortable with myself, so you have to be comfortable with me. And if you are not, I will try

to help you to become comfortable with yourself so you can be comfortable with me. So, I think that is the work that we need to be doing with one another. On a broader level, nobody is perfect. We all are one, and the more that you feel disconnected from me, or a cousin of my color, that is not empowering for you. Nobody is a protagonist or antagonist, everybody is subject to pain and suffering and to ignorance.

Fabiola's sense of identity and empowerment is not based on categorization or definition, rather it is a thing that is self-defined, found within one's self and then shared outwards. Perhaps resonating with her awareness of Haitian history and the struggles many Haitians have had to endure, she universalizes the experience of suffering or "disempowerment" as a part of the human condition, something that unifies us all. For Fabiola, the greater endeavor is seeking to empower those who are powerless and helping people who are "disconnected" to become connected.

Fabiola is relatively new to Holyoke and even with her life experiences and philosophies, she is struggling to find inroads to a community that seems focused on "maintaining life" but not "celebrating life."

It seems like there is a lot going on there, and a lot that can be happening, but [also] a lot of disempowerment. [There is] a lot of ignorance, or lack of knowledge. It's like people don't know what they do not know. [...] It is more like a town just for the sake of living and maintaining life, and not being really affluent with art, or culture, or restaurants. Even food, where can you eat in Holyoke? That is such a big cultural thing, having food and restaurants. I don't think there is a lack of ethnic representation. You have your little corner stores with their representation of identity with the food, but that is more for the sake of maintaining life, not celebrating life.

Fabiola has a clear sense that a transformed community places value on things beyond maintenance. What Fabiola refers to, as "affluent with art or culture" is not necessarily based on a wealth of currency, but rather a different sense of empowerment that allows people to visualize things beyond their basic needs, to imagine performing a Carnival like celebration of life. Fabiola uses restaurants as an

example for that sensibility and notes that the city's lack of visible restaurants is an indicator of the lack of vision needed to empower and embrace the multiple cultures living in Holyoke, but not thriving there. She clarifies, "I feel like a lot of people are so stuck on the basics, that spirituality and emotional well being and physical health [are left out in the] cold. I think that people need to be aware of the fact that there are other possibilities and that there are other things to life besides just maintaining."

Fabiola's vision for change hearkens back to her experience in Brazil and she would begin by with working with children on the idea of a cultural center.

A cultural center, [...] I think you would have to start in the schools, and the smaller children the better. [Exposing them] as they are growing [so that they are] getting that sense of art and expression and music and dance and all of those things I feel, even in these communities of disempowerment, are strong hereditary and ancestral things. Somehow, because surviving has become more important, they become disconnected to that. And in those other communities where that isn't necessarily hereditary or ancestral, that is more important because people are really understanding that [art, expression, music, and dance are] really what makes you feel alive. That is what really connects you to a sense of spirit.

That connection to a sense of spirit is crucial in Fabiola's vision of community and what she perceives is missing in Holyoke. Fabiola argues, that without the arts, and particularly introducing young people to the arts, a community misses out on some important aspects of life. The separation of survival from celebration is ultimately damaging to a community's heritage.

I think that what really inspires me is necessity. I think I have always tried to find something outside of myself and that need, or that want, or that desire, [and that] is what gives birth to a lot of the things that I create. [...] I think [of this woman], she was an artist from Columbia, did a lot of different work with found objects and there was this one piece that she did with shoes and something from the victims of some kind of social or civil war and there were these shoes in a box in San Francisco. When I remember seeing those, I

thought, how can you emote so much feeling? So for me, I think what inspires me toward work or pieces of art is the way that people can take their own connection to God or spirituality, [take] what ever you think is more profound than a concrete wall, or even a tree, and put that in a piece of work and completely feel that. So for me, that is inspiring. The link between two worlds [...].

On the individual scale as an artist, it is this seeking, the desire, the inspiration that allows Fabiola to transcend merely maintaining life, and instead aspiring for something that is more fulfilling. She talks about the power that is created by linking two worlds, the world of the viewer or audience, and the world from which the inspiration emanates. It is this synergy that creates and access to empathy and emotion, which for Fabiola, is a necessity.

Fabiola also worked in a community health clinic. Rather than a detriment to her art making, Fabiola sees it as an asset to how it reinforced a perspective that incorporated the spiritual realm as well as the day-to-day realities.

When I am just in the spiritual or artistic realm, I can become really bogged down, so I think it is good for me to be in both realities and I think that if I did not have a traditional job I would have to find something to do to connect me to the system and society. I think that one of the powers of being an artist is that you get to create. And practicing that aspect, that characteristic of bringing things to life, is really a beautiful thing, but not doing that is great also. As crazy as I think some of the aspects of our society are, it is a necessity, and I think it is a necessity to be connected to that. [...] It's not something that I need, but it is something that helps [me] to be realistic so that I am not living totally in the spiritual realm. Part of the physical reality is society and the structure of the system that we live in. So, in order to make myself and my art real, I must be a part of that. [...] So what I like to do as an artist is be here responsibly in the system and bring in several aspects of the spiritual realm and the artistic realm and that sense of creation, and bring things to life.

Fabiola's involvement in what she calls "the system" has the dual purpose of helping her art maintain a connection to the "society and structure of the system we live in."

While it also helps inject a sense of the spiritual and artistic into the "physical

reality.” Fabiola is conscious of at least two simultaneously existing realities and the need to recognize and participate in both in order to fully maintain a life of balance.

An important aspect of Fabiola’s sense of community occurs through the kinds of exchange that includes the importance of giving as well as receiving, “I love volunteering, and I think that the only way that you can get is by giving, and not necessarily for trade of money.” Fabiola includes exchanges involving knowledge, which for her become an important way to create an extension of a sense of family.

That was my life in Brazil. It could be food, or it could be money, or could be almost anything. But I also love exchanging knowledge for knowledge. I know how to do this and you know how to do that. And you teach me how to do this and I'll teach you how to do that. That's what makes us family, and that's what a brother does with the sister, and a mother does with her daughter, and the dad does with a son. So when you do that, that interconnectedness and mingling, there is so much to learn and to benefit from.

Fabiola’s sense of family blends with her sense of civic engagement, and her sense of common experience. By treating one another as a family member, an individual is able to share their assets and the whole family benefits. If everyone learns how to do the things they need to learn in order to survive, and hopefully thrive, then a knowledge economy enriches everyone.

With her art making, Fabiola balances a kind of resourceful sustainability, with a recognition that while that resourcefulness can be a source of rich individuality, at times one needs the correct tools to do a specific function.

I don't ever really want things that I can't have and I don't ever feel like I can't have anything if I want it. That is one of the things that I really love about my artwork, that it comes out of everything and nothing. I do spend the money on the materials that I need. I am not going to buy pencils that don't draw the way I want to draw, or buy them just because they're cheaper. So I really invest in value and in quality. And I think, at the same time I do that, that there is so much that you don't need to get [buy] to make something. [...] I don't ever feel like I am limited by money at all and what I can and can't do

based on what I have. Since I know and I feel that there is such an abundance of things, if I financially can't afford them, just thinking outside of that construct, maybe it's \$10 for this tube of paint, [and recognizing] it is just another thing to put you into a box. You can't have this unless you have \$10. Well maybe if that's the case instead of paint I would use mud. And that ends up being more powerful than any \$10 tube of paint that I could use on a painting.

For Fabiola, the accessibility of a perceived need can be another socially constructed tool for disempowerment. Like her community work, Fabiola subverts what initially might be seen as a deficit into an asset. Through her use of non-traditional materials, she is able to create something that is more authentic to her lived experience. While mud may not work the same as paint on a canvas, it adds something to a composition that paint might not be able to convey.

Fabiola is actively engaged as an individual practicing artist and as a member of her community. She is sharing her knowledge and experience in ways that increase the avenues of possibility by using art to deconstruct issues founded in social constructions of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Fabiola exhibits an incredible resourcefulness that she has seemingly intuitively transformed into a community economy model, one that is focused on quality of life. Her optimism and generosity is conveyed through the interview transcription. One can imagine her as an incredible asset, and while she is still seeking to find how her role best fits into her new community, Fabiola is confident that wherever she lands she will continue her special transformative mission of infusing a spirituality and intention into people's lives to help them to, not just maintain, but to celebrate and thrive in their endeavors.

Eric Deluca

In his interview, researcher Eric Deluca, a musician, consultant, and at the time the U.S. representative for the United Nations Year of Cooperatives, talked about the creative output of artists as the generation of data. In thinking about creativity, art making, and specifically songwriting, Eric relates the generation of data to pattern recognition, an ability to pull together impulses and disparate thoughts into something coherent. Often, in our meetings with the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project researchers, Eric would draw throughout our discussions, and then share a diagram or visual map of the ideas we were working on. I likened it to a kind of visual thinking, but for Eric, it was more akin to songwriting, or pattern recognition. Eric could take elements of a conversation and think about how they impacted our lives, and then arrange them in a way that allowed abstract ideas to take on tangible meaning in a similar way that a songwriter takes personal material and personal emotions and reshapes it in a way that allows the content of a song to become personal for the listener as well.

Eric's sensibilities as a musician inform his thinking about organizations and process. It allows him to think in ways that are not repetitive and that transcend rote transcription so that his musical sensibilities become a metaphor for how he approaches all of his varied endeavors. Eric likens the dangers of rote repetition to an experience he had composing with a keyboard loop (repeating phrase) and how it enforced a uniformity that seemed to squash innovation.

I think because you're a musician, once you start, you get in sync with whatever rhythms are around you. So, if those rhythms are really

mechanical, like I had bad experiences doing composition with a keyboard that looped, because if you kept letting the thing loop too many times there was a static quality to it, a kind of mechanical quality to it that started to be really kind of insipid, [...] that kind of thing that if you take a clock and have it tick every second. That's unnatural in a way that will lock my thinking to it.

For Eric, there is a danger in enforced rigidity that confines his creativity and limits what is possible. In order to counter this tendency, he has developed techniques to alter his environment in ways that allow him to block out the mechanical desire for conformity. Eric does this through his meditation practice.

I've studied and practiced a bunch of meditation and one of the things in that arena is to not necessarily have your mind functioning [...] through words and language. [...] At a certain point you can kind of relax around that and have the thought process be less embedded in language. Because your brain isn't really functioning in language, it's an overlay.

There is something below the "overlay" of language that Eric finds enticing. It is something that has the ability to transcend the standard patterns that we experience in the language-based world. For Eric, breaking through the confines of repetitive thinking or the constructs of language involves a spatial method of exploring connections between ideas. He explains his drawing process while listening to ideas as one way to organize this spatial thinking.

So I think the drawing stuff... is [about] ideologic systems and structures. And so that's when it becomes helpful to do those kinds of diagrams. So if you're talking about somebody who has different channels related to their artistic activities, to see how those things inter-relate would be a reason that I would lay it out visually. I think to put things in space makes it easier to see how one thing relates to another and how an individual person can have these different components of their system. I think it comes from my background in systems thinking and organizational learning and that kind of network development system processes. [...] It's more like a systems thinking than a visual thinking per se. [...] Or, it's more spatial than visual. So you're kind of spatializing a system.

Eric's process, of illustrating a spatial network, a kind of conceptual schematic or map to ideas that works outside the boundaries of linearity or language, is reflected in the way he shares his ideas and it allows him to think in alternative ways outside a standard norm, or to see connections that might not be as visible in a linear or rigid framework.

Eric's ability to think in spatial relationships aids him in his work with cooperative networks across the country. It allows him to take vast amounts of information and organize it in a way that enables him to recognize their relationships and propose possible ways to move forward.

I think a lot in maps, and how the energy of different groups relate to different geographic areas and how, you know, if I'm thinking about something that's going on in the Upper Midwest and then something else is going on in the Pacific Northwest and something else is going on in the Northeast. It's like I have a visual sense of where they are in relation to the country, and then I also have a tonal sense of the feeling of that network cluster. And then, that combination of the spatial and the tonal leads to action thoughts. So I think maybe because the amount of pressure that's on me to come up with strategies and propose actions and stuff, that my brain crunches that data into next steps. We should talk to this cluster in this part of the country with this tone first, because there are certain aspects of their social system that make sense to begin with.

Eric's synthesis, his mapping of systems of interconnectedness, and the recognition of differences, allows for a perspective of possibility whereas a more restrained perspective might be hampered by an inability to make use of the information.

For Eric, thinking in systems or patterns, and the mapping of those patterns is a way to access an alternative way of thinking. He relates this kind of mapping to the process of composing music.

Like the song "Yesterday" by Paul McCartney, he wrote it, his brain wrote it while his brain was waking up with the words "scrambled eggs," and then he went to the piano and had the melody of it. And then he had to check with

people, “Have you heard this before?” just to make sure he wasn’t remembering a song that already existed. And “Satisfaction” by Keith Richards. He literally wrote it either while he was falling asleep, or he woke up, wrote it and went back to sleep. So, if you listen to the little cassette that he had by his bed, it’s like that riff or whatever for a minute or two, then snoring for 45 minutes. But luckily he had the tape recorder right by his bed and the guitar right on his bed. So I think that kind of a pattern [or system of thinking], you can see why it would be a survival skill for humans, you know, historically, to make those patterns. And so a lot of what I do is both using that [subconscious] pattern impulse and data to try to make the decisions and take good actions, and then also to allow those emergent patterns to become something new in more of an artistic or creative sphere.

For Eric, pattern recognition is a survival skill. It is something that allows for a kind of innovation that accesses thinking that is occurring below the cognizant level, like when someone is in periods of sleep or near sleep. For Eric the mind is constantly trying to organize things into patterns, “One of the things that’s interesting about brains is that they’re so programmed to see patterns that they’ll [expend] a lot of effort to make a pattern even when there isn’t one.” It is these newly generated patterns that become templates for the next Beatles or Rolling Stones song.

In addition to his organizational planning work, when writing his own music, Eric is often open to the way minds generate patterns and how that is reflected in the structure or development of a song. He talked about working with his band around an idea and allowing that idea to develop in complexity and completeness.

Because you have a relaxed stance around that pattern recognition, we’re like, okay, this is a new pattern, and we’re codifying it. And I’m willing to repeat it. I’m willing to sing the same verse that I thought of until I think of the next verse, and not worry about that. And so you walk away with a document of whatever that [new] pattern was. So you’re... it’s like making new data.

With songwriting Eric is discovering a pattern, and then allowing that pattern to reveal the next pattern, and so on, until he is able to write or record the music that

codifies it into a concrete song that can be conveyed to band mates, and ultimately an audience. Eric can utilize a similar creative process and apply it to his work as a consultant where he is able to take an initial idea, play with it, and allow it to grow into something more complex and detailed, and then map the idea's processes and its connections in a way that takes an abstract process and makes it concrete and conveyable.

So I think in a network development sphere where there's people's lives and money and stuff on the line, where you feel like you need to make a good decision and have it be transparent and help people understand why you did what you did, that exercise of taking the pattern recognition and then also looking at the data and looking really clearly at the intersection between the data and the pattern so that you have a clear decision that's easy to understand and easy to understand how you got there [is crucial].

Eric places his creative process as into a realm where it can be documented and validated. The plan that emerges draws from the environment and existing data, and from that generates new information or data and new possibilities.

Eric was able to refine his definition of data, making it easy for him to transition from his idea of data in his work as a consultant, to data as the product of a musician's creative process.

[I]n the creative sphere, you're actually creating your data. And the [...] the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office supports that. So if you create something that's new and you codify it: "Here's the words, here's the chords, here's a recording of it," and you send it down to the Library of Congress, they'll be like, "OK, that is now data." It was nothing and now it's something, and because it's original, that's the criteria for making it data. So rather than thinking of it as visual thinking, I would think of it as kind of cultivating a relationship with pattern recognition.

In a similar process to how the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project seeks to codify the practices of artists and artisans, Eric talks about the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office certifying a song as official data. It is a thing that is official

recognized as existing. While it may have existed before being registered with a copyright, the formal process allows it to have a different kind of existence; it is a way to perform a different kind of reality. Eric also returns to the idea that the process is a “relationship with pattern recognition.” There are multiple techniques that allow a song to be come into existence, developed into a pattern, given structure, mapped, and documented.

Eric also applied the concept of pattern recognition in his work with the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project in his role as a researcher interviewing his peers. Many of Eric’s interviews were with people he has collaborated with and the process of interviewing created a transformative moment.

I think that this project has been a really good example of this, and this is something that I think is one of the most compelling things for me to talk about in terms of helping people understand the value of this work for artists and in artists’ networks. If you have a basic pattern recognition sense, if you’ve decided to collaborate with somebody and you’ve collaborated multiple times, at some level you have recognized and sort of acted upon a pattern. And so, if you are then going to say, “Well, who am I going to interview?” and you think about your network, and you select somebody who you’ve decided to collaborate with. [...] What I’ve found with these interviews was, not in every case, but in multiple cases and in profound ways, that what you learned about that pattern [of collaboration] became exponentially more rich through the interview process and it actually reinforced the commitment level of that collaboration and created an impulse that deepened and expanded the collaboration. [Each person involved] had a much richer, respect-filled appreciation of the other person’s process and art product. So I think that’s a real value added for artists, and also for arts economies.

Eric has redefined value in the context of his artist and artisan interviews as something that is conceptual as a benefit for artists and their collaborators, as well as increasing understanding of process and product. Like Eric’s consultant clients, when a thing is mapped and developed as a coherent process, then its intrinsic value

is conveyable, it is understood. It then becomes a thing that has been codified and has authority.

Phyllis Labanowski

Phyllis Labanowski is a researcher and multi-genre activist artist focusing on issues of race, and class in her work. She is highly educated, with graduate degrees in education and art. Phyllis' personal practices mirror her professional aspirations, where she participates in a community that pools resources for mutual and individual assistance. She organizes Water Dances, a series of interactive community performance art projects that integrate music, visual spectacle, and a spiritual connection to the environment. She is a curriculum developer and trainer for Class Action: Building Bridges Across the Class Divide, publishes small handmade books focusing on social issues, and most recently contributed to *Created Equal: A Curriculum for High Schoolers and Middle Schoolers on Class and Classism*. In spite of all her successes, or perhaps because of the awareness that is inherent in her activism, Phyllis has many conflicting frustrations with her work and as a community builder, activist, and arts worker. However, as an artist she has no lack of clarity explaining, "I do any kind of art I need to, to figure out how to communicate my ideas."

Phyllis' sense of community need is one that weaves healing with spirituality. "I think people are really hungry for the sacred, and for spirit, and for connecting to things bigger than themselves and so, I think we're looking for that." Her own father struggled and died from a mental illness, hoarding, and some of that experience, her father's isolation and the accumulation of several houses filled with possessions, has informed how Phyllis produces art and her desire for functionality. "I don't consider

myself an object-maker, but I think I do make objects and I do end up selling objects. So, you know, I think about how will people use this.” Throughout the interview Phyllis struggled with how to match her beliefs and ethics with her practices. For the most part, she seems to have forged a way forward that, while challenging, feeds her enthusiasm and desire for community healing.

Earlier in her life, Phyllis worked as an educator, studied racism and multiculturalism, and became a consultant in schools. Developing out of this work was a passion to focus on working with activists and organizers to bring together diverse communities in conflict and try to negotiate commonalities that enabled the groups to work with each other.

[W]hat I realized was that everyone has a place in movement building, everyone. Whether you are a cook and you are cooking the delicious food for everybody. Whether you are a musician, or a facilitator, or a worker bee. And artists absolutely have a role because we need to inspire people with messages that are very, very hard. You know, race and racism, and class and classicism, and gender inequity, and homophobia, and bullying. All of that oppresses us and we cannot be fully human when we’re oppressed, neither the oppressor nor the person who’s the target.

Over time, Phyllis developed a broad-based identity that included being an artist, activist, educator and organizer. She was able to focus this multipronged identity into her studies when she returned to school for a degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

While she was in art school she did not have much access to financial aid since she already possessed a masters degree for education. However, a friend gifted her free housing and parking in Boston for eight semesters. In appreciation for the gift, Phyllis gave her one piece of artwork each semester that her host could choose from all the work that she produced over that semester. Without this person’s

support, and funds that were left to her and her siblings after her father's death, going back to school would not have been a possibility.

Within her community, Phyllis is working to collectively educate and empower artists to utilize their assets as things of value. Her own experiences, with a patron and witnessing her father's life, drives her to ask, how can individuals contribute to something bigger than themselves?

I think people like me—of European descent—no longer connect to, a culture or even a religion. We have to figure that out on our own. We don't have ceremony, ritual, or, elders doing that with us anymore. Yeah, I think I'm an extremely creative force, working on behalf of community.

In this way, Phyllis has taken on a role as a kind of medium for her community. She seeks out pain or injustice so that she can apply her knowledge and skills as a healing, educating, and building force. Phyllis wants to make certain her work has utility and meaning rather than just taking up space. The utility and meaning, or what she calls activism and spirit, become a kind of litmus test about whether she can become engaged or not.

It forces me to be a deeper activist, organizer, artist, and visionary. So, for me, it's the mission of bringing together activism—making the world a better place—and spirit, which is more than me working here on behalf of community. I always say that I want my work to be of use. If it can't be of use, then I'm not so interested.

In part, because Phyllis is so talented and knowledgeable, her skills are in high demand, though she is quick to recognize she is not alone. Phyllis recognizes the important role artists can play in a community and how vital that can be to the health of that community. However, artists are often asked to donate their time and work for free, or absorb the absence of resources.

Phyllis talks about artists always living in an environment that is like an economic crash, where there is always a challenge to pay basic bills and maintain the subsistence living needed to ensure basic necessities. One response to this is to engage in barter and time banks.

You know, the economic crash...it's kind of like New Mexico; you know, when the economy crashes, New Mexico just keeps moving along because they ain't never seen an economic boom. They're always in an economic crash. And I think that's true for many artists. And, so, I joined Valley Time Trade where you trade time into a time bank for more time. And I've been pushing that to artists and saying, "Look, I don't have money to pay to get my deck stained, but I can trade my graphic design time." And [now] there's that mechanism in place and that's a valley-wide mechanism, and it's a national project, too.

In addition to the formal structure of Valley Time Trade, there is a complex web of resources needed to create community art projects. For Phyllis' Water Dances, she is utilizing local grant funding, private donations, her own funds, trading design work for goods and services, and utilizing volunteer work, particularly from her participant performers.



Figure 12: Water Dance

While the performers are volunteering their time, Phyllis also points out the volunteers are honored to participate in community building and community healing, and so that is a kind of trade as well. Because this is the reality for so many artists, the need to utilize a variety of resources and modalities, the economic downturn has not necessarily been an eye opening epiphany for her community of artists.

The house is a resource. I had to get a housemate to help pay the bills. I can grow my own food. Right? I can dry my clothes on the clothesline. I heat with wood. You know, all those ways that I was already living are what artists tend to do, I think, particularly in rural economies.

The rural nature of Franklin County enables a kind a self-sufficiency that is more challenging to utilize in an urban setting. She can engage in practices that allow her to reduce the bills that she needs to pay with U.S. currency. Because Franklin County is a rural setting, Phyllis points out, there is less money available in the economy, artists make less money, and therefore they need to think of very creative ways of accessing funding, and that can be very challenging for many artists.

I just met the woman who heads up the Massachusetts Cultural Council. 7 million is being granted out. I have seen \$800 of it, through the Fostering Art and Culture Project. Most artists have no idea how to get any of that. And let's face it, \$800 is what? A half a month's worth of bills. So the money isn't flowing. It ain't trickling down, people! And then I'm still wondering about the 2 million, you know? There's a 9 million dollar budget. 7 million dollars are coming through all these projects. Where's the other 2 million? That's my question. 167 million, this year, from the National Endowment for the Arts. I didn't get any of that, you know? And I don't mean me personally, just, how are artists actually accessing this? People who have to get more. That's how the Massachusetts Cultural money is working and that's how the NEA is working. And what I'm seeing out here is, if I'm not connected to an organization that's already doing some kind of art out here, like the Eric Carle museum or the Northampton Center for the Arts, then what pool is available to us?

One of the challenges in the cultural funding of the county, state, and country is how the trickle down economics does not always reach the people the funding is purported to help. The large sums of money distributed across the state and across the country, are often focused on organizations or very small groups of individuals associated with formal organizations. It is much more challenging for people like Phyllis, who work more informally with community groups, to access the funding. And it is even harder for people less savvy or aware about funding sources to access the meager available funds. Phyllis is also self aware enough to recognize, even with her challenges, she has access to some practices that may be easier due to social privilege.

Trade, gifting, living on the skinny, inheritance, which is operating in my case from my dad. That, inequitably, is available more to white people than it is to people of color.

Throughout the research project Phyllis has been particularly sensitive about racial diversity, both in the demographics our researchers and in the demographics of our interviewees. She has been a vocal check for Abby and I in our process, and a reality check for the limitations of our network of artists and artisans in Franklin County. She pushed all the researchers to reach beyond each individual's comfort zones to try to pull in an inclusive pool of interviewees as possible.

Phyllis is also very cautious about the funding/un-funding pattern that is inherent in grant cycles. So many of the cultural jobs in the region are grant funded and the people with the skills and enthusiasm to do the needed work find themselves with short-term jobs.

That funding and un-funding cycle is killing us. It's killing arts organizations and it puts these organizations in constant crisis. [...] It's a waste of money, in

my opinion. It's a waste of, you know, the trickle-down. And then, all of these artists have all these great ideas. [...] We do not have a failure of imagination but we have a failure of human and financial resources to support them.

The cultural organizations, that are supported by grant funding, that can in turn support the artists, are then thrown into crisis by the grant cycles. The funding seems to get caught in the constant cycle of working to apply for grants and meeting each grant's particular outcomes because so many of the organizations are wholly dependent on the grant cycles to maintain staffing and other costs. On the other hand, if the funding could be utilized differently, or "trickle down" more efficiently, Phyllis imagines no shortage of ideas for how artists could generate something different that could really impact the community. The challenge is how to alter traditional allocations of grant funding, increase artists' access to grant funding, and educating artists on how to access those funds.

Despite Phyllis' extensive community building efforts there are times that she still feels isolated and questions whether she can exist solely within the Western Massachusetts ecosystem.

Yeah, so my location in Franklin County, I can afford a house here, I have access to land here. You know, I'm still wondering if I will find more collaborators here or if I will find myself, like many artists, having to go outside of Franklin County. And I want to say, I think that there are really good artists in Franklin County, obviously there are. I am just wondering where they are and how to meet them.

Phyllis is again speaking about diversity here, but this time in context of the diversity of artists' styles, mediums, and politics. She is seeking other likeminded artists who are doing non-traditional work that is edgy, draws in political and social commentary, and has community utility. She says, "I'm an edge-worker, so I take people to the edge. I'm like, come on, jump! We'll link arms, we'll fly!" It is this very

edginess that makes Phyllis' art stand out in a region with many traditional artists, and while she is trying to construct the community she wishes to inhabit, the assets and deficits of the region are sometimes in a tenuous balance. In spite of the challenges, Phyllis still manages to maintain an optimistic outlook, "I said, follow Miles Horton's advice, if you have a good idea, go find out who's doing it and join them. And let's stop everybody working in these silos." Franklin County's rural pioneer style environment often pushes people to work autonomously and sometimes makes them feel even more isolated than they are. By learning more about what is occurring in the region through knowledge sharing, there may be possible avenues to collaborate rather than duplicate efforts in isolation. One of Phyllis' projects with Valley Art Share is doing precisely this, creating a cultural map of the Pioneer Valley.

Phyllis takes a strong activist stance to push for artists to earn something for their efforts. Rather than allowing her talents and skills to be counted as free resources, Phyllis wants both artists and community members to recognize her work as assets that can be exchanged for other things of value, whether that is currency or seed garlic.

I say the time of the lone wolf is over and we've got to start organizing ourselves. There's these arts organizations doing some really fun things and there's a funding cycle that comes and it goes, but we need to strengthen ourselves so we are no longer allowing ourselves or our brothers or sisters get exploited. "We want you to give us another free.... Can you organize this for free for us?" No! I need to be able to pay my bills too. I think it's trying to figure out an equitable redistribution for labor where we all make it together.

Phyllis is modeling how this looks in action with her work for Valley Art Share where she is paid \$20 an hour for a set amount of hours a week. She demonstrates

her worth by providing enthusiastic participation during those hours, but she also demonstrates her utility by not working on the project when she is not getting paid.

I would like to get paid to do this. I'm not going to keep doing my work for free because I can't afford it. This is the issue, right? The core issue: Artists over-volunteer. They're running all sorts of things because they're underemployed and unemployed. So we keep volunteering and we collude with our own oppression, which is then why you don't pay me for my artwork. That's why I call myself an art worker. You have to pay me for my work.

As an “art worker” Phyllis bridges multiple realities, in the context of the wage earning, grant funded, non-profit organizations, she works for an hourly wage or billable hours. She still focuses on endeavors that she cares about and is passionate for, but the contractual agreement of dollars and hours is clear and specific, and for Phyllis, feels like a contract of respect, that an “art worker” can be treated with the same kind of respect a lawyer, plumber, or electrician does. Outside of the wage earning reality, is the language between artists, where trade for services, work for honor or passion, and volunteering are all currencies that are valid and in constant exchange.



Figure 13: Phyllis Labanowski

Phyllis is eager to explore different ways to promote alternative visions of the creative economy. For several of her projects she has created little books or chapbooks that are graphically engaging and easy to read and comprehend. They are also more affordable than a traditionally published book. She envisions a series of little books detailing different aspects of the diverse community economy. For much of her work, the effect or product of the work is as much an asset as the labor that went into the endeavor. Knowledge is an important asset and one that can transform communities.

The idea was to come together and function collectively. Look at a thriving versus surviving, resilient community. You don't want to just move the artists forward, you want to move everybody forward. You know, big thinking. And then other people are talking about art worker unions, guilds, collectives—all of those are really good ideas. The issue I am finding in my analysis of those ideas is that the amount of work it takes and the amount of money that you can get—income that you can draw [from the endeavor]. The startup of that requires an enormous amount of resources.

While Phyllis is open to exploring unions, guilds, and collectives, and she possesses the organizing skills, the promotional skills, and activist skills to make an endeavor like these work, she is challenged by the time and energy that she feels she would need to invest into a project of this scale, and she is unclear how monetary income could emerge out of a union, guild, or collective. So many of Phyllis' wonderful ideas have these kinds of contradictions where there are limitations to the idealized vision, and yet, Phyllis perseveres and does achieve impressive work at the pace that works for her and that allows her to feel purposeful and respected.

[...] So we listen to Moonlight—he came to one of the art work conversations—and he said, “I’m just exhausted. I’ve been trying to do this gallery for a year. I’ve quit a bunch of times. I can’t do this!” And he sits across from the woman who is the partner in the Orange Innovation Center, this huge fucking industrial building. They’re trying...[after] 10 years in the

red, [this is the] first year they're turning a profit. She said, "We just kept at it." And it's still only half rehabbed, it's half full. It's a little micro-community of her and her husband. He finally quit his second job. She's still doing her other job. It takes people like that—people who are willing to sustain it—and stories like that. That's an asset in the community, their story, the stories of the people who you know. These are hindsight stories, I like to call them. It's like, damn—we didn't know that that was going to become that!

It was wonderful to see Phyllis' excitement at a successful endeavor. The example of the Orange Innovation Center is a demonstration of the power of perseverance overcoming all the challenges and helping create something viable and self-sustaining. For Phyllis, these are touchstones in the sense that one can learn from what was accomplished and try to replicate it in another location, but they are also touchstones in the sense that they help create an air of possibility when so often the air is clouded with doubt.

Throughout all her work, Phyllis seems to approach projects with an optimistic sense of possibility. Clearly, this is not a blind optimism, but one tempered by limitation and necessity. Phyllis examines both the empty half and full half of the glass of water. She seems incredibly invested in her community with equal parts frustration and deep caring. Phyllis wants to contribute in ways that address community healing; explores non-traditional forms of art as communication; pushes existing organizations to collaborate outside of their insular circles; and works to be able to generate some kind of exchange, whether that is wage earning, trade, or gifting. I left the interview with Phyllis amazed by how many ways she is engaging in multiple forms of economies in order to maintain the life she has prioritized as important and vital. The diversity that Phyllis espouses is practiced in nearly every sector of her life, whether it is the medium of her art and

graphic design, or what she engages in for wage earning, or her community activism. She supports her community, and the community supports her. While the exchange is not an easy one, she is finding ways to make it work, and that in itself is impressive. I feel the same way she did when seeing the couple from the Orange Innovation Center, impressed and excited that there is someone like Phyllis working on building a community focused art practice.



Figure 14: One of Phyllis' worktables

Deborah Andrews

Deborah is a painter, community activist, and consultant. She was an art major at Cornell University in the 1950s before getting married and stepping away from art.

This is 1954 when I graduated. In those days most women did not think of a career. I married at the end of that summer after graduation, had four children, essentially spent my life as a wife and mother until sometime in the sixties. And anyway, I went through a divorce, went to graduate school to support myself and my children, and ended up teaching English. I actually applied to teach art but they had already hired someone.

After raising children and engaging in a series of careers in education, public relations, and as the executive director of an arts council, at the age 62, she reignited her passion for art. While spending some time helping her mother she enrolled in a studio art class and she was so successful the director persuaded her to move to New York to pursue art. She laughs at the memory and says, "I was too old to be this naïve." With \$2,000.00 Deborah made a threadbare, but utterly exciting, pilgrimage to New York City with the goal of developing a portfolio of new work.

Luckily, Deborah's oldest son, who lived in New York, was living abroad at the time and she became his house sitter while they were away. While Deborah was settling in, the director for the National Academy resigned, and with her background in education and arts administration, she was able to step into the interim position.

So I got the job. And they were paying me wages, but it was by the hour. This director had dumped all of the contents of the files out of the file folders. I was the new kid on the block. I knew nothing. I mean, I had lived outside New York City as a kid, but I didn't know a thing about the art world, I mean talk about naïve [...]. And so, because I had a background in PR, I worked with

them and got their lists developed, [...] got their classes enrolled [...]. I made some changes and turned around some things at the National Academy, but I was working fifty to sixty hour weeks because they were paying me by the hour! I was getting at least a halfway decent amount of money each month and I was living in an apartment that was free of charge... and I was able to walk to the National Academy because I was ten blocks away. But I did everything from cleaning closets, to supporting the faculty, and it was just a very rich experience and I met wonderful, wonderful people who were well connected in the art world in New York and teaching there... but I ended up not studying much. The faculty and the students were very generous to me and they allowed me to slip into classes and draw. I couldn't paint of course, because setting up would take too much time, but I could draw at least. So I did a little tiny bit of that.

Eventually a permanent replacement was hired and rather than take a job as her replacement's assistant, she enrolled at the Art Students' League of New York for lessons, got a job in a gallery, and worked with a faculty member to do development work for a school he was starting in exchange for classical training and studio space.

I worked Wednesday through Sunday at the art gallery, and Monday and Tuesday morning and afternoon I went to the Art Students' League, and every night after work on the weekdays I went and drew from the model from seven-thirty 'till midnight. So that's how I survived New York!

It was startling to hear about Deborah's stamina and fortitude regardless of her age. She worked hard to prioritize art making in her life. In addition to her hourly paid work she continued to pursue other opportunities, and while showing her portfolio for a job illustrating cassette covers, she was hired to do a portrait by a woman working at the recording studio.

Eager to take the commission, Deborah realized she didn't have a space to do the portrait. Fortuitously, a friend of Deborah's from Vermont had offered her space to use in the city.

[S]he'd come from a pretty wealthy family. Anyway, she owned this townhouse down on Charles Street and she told me when I left Vermont that if I decided to go to New York that she would let me stay there [...] because it

would be empty. So I [...] called her up and I said, "I have this opportunity to do this but I have no place to do it in." And she said, "You can use my studio in my apartment there."

Once again, between finding rooms to rent with bathroom and kitchen privileges,

Deborah is gifted space that enables her to live in New York and work as an artist.

Later, when she picked up a temporary position at a law firm, another opportunity opened up for her with portraits.

I was a receptionist in a law firm, I had sort of a long-term temp position, and one of the women who was working there in a support position had a photograph of her son. I had seen it and I said to her, "I love to draw and I'm getting bored to tears up here. Can I take this photograph and just when I'm here do a pencil sketch of it?" And she just fell in love with that and then the word got around that I was an artist and one of the lawyers, a woman, asked me to do a portrait of her two sons from photographs, so I got a commission out of that. So that was good.

Clearly, Deborah was a talented worker in the wage-earning workforce, but her real work, her passion for art, was what was really driving her. Her successes in the workforce were in service of her continued art making.

Simultaneously, Deborah was finding a voice politically and started engaging in activism to prevent an attack on Iraq.

I'd been very political and I was involved internationally with a very small group of people trying to prevent the attack on Iraq [...]. There's something called Article 377 in the UN Constitution and Article 377 gives [any member country] a right to make a declaration. And a declaration has no legal standing, but it does have political impact, hopefully. So what we did was we developed a declaration and had it printed in three languages and our goal was to get the General Assembly to adopt it or something similar to it. So we were giving them a document to work from [...] if they chose. We met with the undersecretary of the UN; we met with almost every ambassador. I walked into every embassy in the city, which is an education in itself. So that was a wonderful experience for me actually. We, of course, were unsuccessful but it taught me a lot.

Deborah's work to create a community response to political events, while educating and engaging, was ultimately also dispiriting.

I had had my fill, frankly, of groups thinking they were going to make a difference politically because I found that their depth of understanding and their capacity to see things from more than one point of view was pretty limited [...] and I just wasn't ready or willing to cope with that.

In part because of Deborah's education, her life experiences, and her commitment to seeing a broader perspective on issues, she possessed an intersectional vision of how different ideas might fit together. While this was insightful for her, it was also frustrating when she was faced with people who seemed unable or unwilling to accept other perspectives. Eventually, like the struggle to find work that would maintain an acceptable living standard, the activism was not enough to sustain her and she moved to Shelburne Falls at the urging of one of her children.

Once ensconced in Western Massachusetts, Deborah frequented the local McCusker's Market, which also served as a central meeting place for the community. She found a housing opportunity that she could partially barter landscaping work for on a bulletin board at the market, and found a job gardening for an hourly wage paid in cash. Eventually she was introduced to the sister of the owner of McCusker's Market and was asked to exhibit a show at the market. At Greenfield's Coop Market, a community center of activity, Deborah met a new friend who was able to extend the offer of studio space.

I was at a political meeting at Greenfield's and met Ava and we are very aligned politically and in many other ways, and we're looking for ways to make a difference politically [...]. When she learned I was an artist and didn't have studio space, [and that] I was living in a room with bath and kitchen privileges, she said, "Oh, we live on this farm and we have all these buildings and they're not being used. Come on down!"

The gifting of space by a new friend was transformative for Deborah. After spending so long in New York City, she found herself in an entirely different landscape defined by the outdoors.

So I went into this wonderful old barn, and I love barns, I went and I picked out this spot way in the back and I cleaned out a spot where the cows had been and the sheep, and then brought down all my paintings and set up. [...] I love being outdoors, that's the other side of me. If I could live in a tree house, I would. And so I went outside to paint and I started painting their buildings, and their house, and their gardens, and spending time out of doors. One day, I was sitting and I turned around and I looked at the barn where I had my studio and then I ended up doing a painting. It was just a wonderfully productive time. [...] And when I first exhibited them at McCusker's I was able to thank [the owners of the barn], in a sense, for the opportunity.

It was interesting to see how throughout Deborah's journey, various spaces have been gifted to her where she could pursue painting and drawing. From the classes she sat in on at the National Academy Museum and School, the classical lessons by the professor in his studio, the portraiture in a vacant apartment, various living spaces, and then finally the barn, each gift has impacted how Deborah was able to grow and express herself along the way.

While Deborah's ability to find her way into a community and become an active participant seemed boundless from the outside, she did relay some of the challenges of being isolated as an artist without employment.

I started substitute teaching and that turned out to be just a wonderful gift, because one of the things that you guys may have discovered, is that when you're looking for work, and you're not working, you're isolated, and that isolation diminishes your sense of yourself and your capacities, and anything you thought you might be able to do, or that came naturally to you, is gone. And so, getting me back in the public sphere, if you will, was extremely helpful.

For just a moment Deborah gave us a glimpse into what must have been a challenging time. It is only after one hears her say this, that one recognizes that

between her truly amazing wonderful stories and accomplishments, there were also low points, periods of isolation and a loss of agency. Luckily, Deborah has the skill set to find employment, and the ability to seek out and find a supportive community that helped her climb out of diminished sense of self.

One of Deborah's resilient traits is her sense of possibility. She believes that if she has an intention to do something, and prepares herself for the opportunity, the opportunity will reveal itself. Deborah's performative stance allows alternate realities to come into being because she allows for the possibility that her current reality is not a fixed one.

I think I have this belief, when I'm at my best, that if you're very clear about your intentions, the universe opens doors for you. It's something—I don't know, your antenna are out there and [...] it's really strange because I read a book recently [...]. It talked about intentions [...] and how you frame your intention really clearly. And then, you commit [...] to things that may help you along the way with that intention. And out of those two things, [...] it's simply that you have to keep the psychic energy going in order for that to work, and that's the challenge, I think. But it does work. I mean I'm convinced of it. I can point to so many things where if you're open, and looking, and out there, and you haven't put the blankets over your head yet, which can sure be a temptation. [...] I didn't know this at the time, but I think it's that you know what you're looking for in a sense and you are seeking it, so to speak. It's not like you're sitting back and saying, "Oh, come to me," but it's sort of like—and it's not like you're out there running around, either—but there's something about every space you're in. [...] I sort of imagine it and then I go look for it. [...] It sounds a little weird but I want to believe this because it has manifested itself, so maybe I need to believe it on a bigger scale.

Deborah really seems to be able to focus on her intentions in this way. She organizes her resources, actively seeks connections, and looks at community bulletin boards for opportunities, but even more importantly, Deborah shifts her internal stance to be open to alternative possibilities, that the thing she wishes for can exist. This stance has allowed her to pursue weak theory alternatives to the dominant

narrative of society's expectations. A part of this performative epistemology is how Deborah is continually engaged in learning and has integrated this into her passion for sociocracy, a consent based community decision-making or governance model. She has been able to combine her passion for teaching, her desire to build community, and her political activism into her sociocratic consulting work where she works with local community members, a local eco-village, and other organizations.

Like so many of Deborah's other opportunities, Deborah was introduced to sociocracy by chance, but her determined study of it, and her skills as a mediator and consultant allowed her to shape her sociocratic work into a new untapped resource for the community.

So anyway, I ended up giving my presentation and I have been going out there once monthly and coaching them in sociocracy. I have developed all kinds of tools that go along with this. I've developed a handbook, an enormous number of tools. [...] So that has provided, with the substitute teaching, my other source of income that has been extraordinarily helpful. I'm getting paid as a consultant and they're paying me what I consider to be generously. I'm sure most consultants wouldn't, but for me it's very generous and I'm delighted to have this opportunity because also it's a learning experience for me as well, and yeah, so that's my other means of income.

Deborah has found a way to address some of the concerns she had within her activist circles when she was in New York by within a community decision-making framework, and by sharing sociocracy as a tool to give voice to individuals while still recognizing difference. She is helping communities work together to become stronger and more effective.

Deborah's experiences seem to have imbued her with a focused sense of purpose and the fortitude of perspective. Her actions have direct connections to her passions and aspirations. She walks through her life seeking opportunities that

allow her to continue pursuing her passions and aspirations, and because she seeks out those opportunities, she is able to find and act upon them.

Simultaneously, as Deborah seeks out opportunities to pursue, other people in the community, affected by the passion and dedication Deborah demonstrates in her painting and community activities, respond in kind, helping open doors to possibilities that might be readily available, but not often utilized, like the barn turned into a painting studio.

During our conversations, Deborah offered her services as a sociocracy mediator as one possible way to help the Rethinking the Creative Economy artists coalesce with ideas that emerge from the project. She also talked about meeting people who live next door to the author Archibald MacLeish's house in Conway, and how the empty house could be utilized as artists' space.

While painting is Deborah passion and life work and she has equipped herself with the tools to monetize her art making including submitting work to galleries and having shows, having a professional agent, and having professional reproductions of her work available for sale, she does not anticipate art generating her living income. While this is a frustration for some artists, for Deborah, she finds strength in belonging to a community and accessing a diversity of resources. Having employment and moving outside the isolation of the self helps give Deborah a sense of agency. By applying her various skillsets to a diverse range of jobs she is able to provide herself with the money she needs, barter arrangements that increase the affordability of living expenses, and is still able to maintain the flexibility of time so

that she can focus on her art making. For Deborah, that makes for a fulfilling life, one that embraces beauty, activism, learning, and art making.

I love creating beauty and it's essential to my being to be surrounded by it, absolutely essential. And I don't care where you put me, what kind of a box, I'm going to go right for creating beauty, you know? That's the first thing I do. So I don't know how to wed these things [activism and art making], if you will. And I don't know if they need to be, maybe they don't need to be. Maybe there's some process that I need to go through intellectually and psychologically to arrive at a place, because I know in my heart that the space in which we function affects everything, everything. I know that from teaching, that the physical space of a classroom, how it affects you visually, psychically, physically, all of it is powerful, powerful. And so I know that, but I don't know how to deal with that in the political context or what I want politically and otherwise.

Aware that the internal space she creates for herself is how she will manifest a blending of her political passions and her art making, Deborah is navigating her world as an explorer might. She's utilizing the available resources, drawing the map as she progresses, and sharing her discoveries with others. She is guided by her ethics as an artist and as a community member, and she is guided by possibility.

Kiran Bhowmik

Kiran was the co-director of Leverett Crafts and Arts a community center for making and sharing art. Tragically, a few months after this interview Kiran passed away from an illness. In this interview, Kiran expressed her devotion to her children and appreciation for all the support she received from family and friends that helped her become an artist.

Kiran's father is from India so Kiran's cultural heritage has always played in the background of her context and informed her work as an artist, and her work as a mother raising children in America.

I really wish that I had learned Bengali and, now that I have kids, there's all these things that are that much more important in my life and [I have] different perspectives on things. One of them is, I feel a certain obligation to, learn Bengali so I can teach my kids. And that's a huge order! [...] Especially when it's not in your community and it's not something that is easy to learn. But, you know, to at least have interviews of my dad talking to his brothers in Bengali [...] even just having that playing while my art is up on the walls adds a certain other layer. A cultural experience, because I love to hear him speaking. I don't understand it. I mean, I know very, very little. [...] But hopefully, if I do get a chance in the future to spend more time there, I would focus again on really trying to learn the language and hanging out in the kitchen and at least learning all the foods! [...] But I think that there will be a time that our kids are going to help us—inspire us—to go back, to continue studying what we may have done in years past or something new. Whether it's the classical Indian dance or the language, we could start together, learning those things. Or music—they're into that right now, studying music. My kids are really young; Taikoda's only five and Kiko is going to be three in December. So they're very young still.

For Kiran, listening to Bengali was a kind of touchstone while she was working, the comfort of something familiar, even as it was not completely comprehensible. Her understanding about the transformative experience of parenting, how priorities shift, and how she was thinking about their future and the things they will learn and find utility from, then became some of the same things she wished for herself.

When Kiran was in high school, one of her teachers encouraged her to submit work to a contest for an exhibition at the Wang Center. Kiran won the competition and for the first time felt confidence and trust in her abilities as an artist.

We were invited to go there and there's this, big ceremony and all these high school kids and you received a certificate award and a this and a that—you know, all these things that they honored you with. And your work was up and it was a pretty fancy, fancy thing, you know. Really, I think [that] was one of those seeds that was planted in me to trust in that process, that creative process, to take pride in it and to feel confident about it.

Kiran carried that trust in the creative process into adulthood where she would need to make choices that prioritized her art making.

It's not an uncommon thing to have people who are committed to the creative process, and to being involved in the arts, having to consciously make choices to not take the other jobs or to live in other places or, you know, to follow that path. I think this whole project has helped me realize that it's a really challenging thing to stay committed to that and to follow it. And I'm not the only one that's really challenged with it. It's like, wow, everybody else has got a similar type of battle, and struggle, and blocks that come up, and not just the financial part, like how do you survive as an artist, but the support system, too. Like, does your spouse really believe in you and trust that you're going to do this...you know, that it's worth your effort and time to cradle this creative idea?

Kiran found that she was blessed with a very supportive family that were willing to balance childcare duties so that she could focus on art and the Leverett Crafts and Arts.

I mean I'm really blessed to have a husband who's a contractor and builds houses and works very, very hard, and parents who live locally. And his parents who live locally and are a really strong support system ...my sister-in-law who is taking care of my son right now, because there's no school and I couldn't find a different babysitter. And, you know, a lot, a lot of support which has certainly allowed me to look like I live the luxurious life of some artist who has patrons that pay for a studio! [laughs] Because I've got a lot of family support, that has let me pursue painting, which doesn't pay.

For Kiran as a mother and artist, the family support network was crucial as she was developing the tenuous balance of part-time work, volunteering, or art making.



Figure 15: Kiran in her studio

Kiran seems to have always been aware of approaching financial stability from a diversity of sources. But Kiran was also attentive to selecting wage-earning work that would give her valuable experience for self-employment and business management. Kiran also volunteered in the Amherst community to give herself experience working with artists in a community organization context before she began working at the Leverett Crafts and Arts.

I was volunteering to take care of the artwork at Rao's and Amherst Crepes and working with artists and bringing their work, putting it up there. I volunteered on the Amherst Art Walk committee trying to put together the art walks and working on the flyers for that and they had a big block party, so I was coordinating all the street entertainers for that.

Kiran was amassing the skillsets that made her such an important person within the arts community. She was working for the community and learning for herself, a kind

of exchange that enabled her to apply for and receive the co-director position at the Leverett Crafts and Arts.

Kiran's work at Leverett Crafts and Arts was part time, a 10 hour a week position. However, she found that she had to put more than 10 hours a week into the work to be effective, though she was conscious that she needed to strike a balance between her work and spending time with her family. Leverett Crafts and Arts has another co-director, who focuses on the building needs, a board of directors, and resident artists. While the work is something Kiran was wholly committed to, she also recognized that it was not sustainable for the long term within the constraints of 10 hours a week.

While Kiran sometimes imagined for herself a different more stable profession, she also came to realize, in part through her interviews with other artists, that her life choices have been purposeful. She prioritized certain choices that enabled her to stay focused on her main goals as an artist and an arts organizer.

[...] Some of the interviews that I've made with other people reminded me that I wasn't ready to give up on certain skills and dreams that I had within my creative soul to [become] a teacher or to follow something else that I wasn't sure was going to satisfy my life in the big picture.

Even with the choices Kiran made, she still has her plan B, which utilizes some of the many skills she has picked up in life. For Kiran, plan B still retained the central element of art making, and supported it through teaching and bodywork. She had a "plan B" for how to survive as an artist.

So that's been on my mind a lot in terms of how to survive and make it as an artist. I think a lot of creative people and artists have to turn to sharing, that and teaching, even if it's not within a traditional system. So that was one of the plans with this studio space [...] to set up a section of the studio space that could be used for teaching silver jewelry classes. [...] For years I studied

silver jewelry and would like to get back into making more of it and teaching would be a way to fund that. And, then also, [having] space dedicated to practicing shiatsu and the gallery space being a place that I could teach yoga classes. I'm a certified yoga teacher and I taught for a couple of years in a few different places. [...T]he plan B of life, to survive as an artist, has always been to waitress and bartend; teach yoga; practice shiatsu; and teach art, jewelry, batik, or stained glass. So that was the plan B – the backup plan – to work on the art the whole time, but find other ways that I could manage my own schedule and find my own clients.

Throughout her experiences, Kiran accumulated various skills that were seen as assets to the community. In addition to her training as an artist, her accomplishments as a craftsperson and her ability to lead yoga and give shiatsu were given a value that was then paid for in currency, which then allowed Kiran to continue her work as an artist. While the complexity of earning an income with teaching and bodywork was daunting, Kiran was also developing the business skills she could utilize for such an endeavor.

[...T]he self-employment and the business side of all of that is what I've been trying to teach myself over the last 5 or 6 years. [...] I've been very specific with the jobs that I've picked. Outside of waitressing and bartending, a couple of the jobs that I've taken, like for one, the job here at the Crafts and Arts as a co-director, doing arts administration. And working at Zanna in sales and in retail. I knew that that job was going to teach me a lot about how to run a good business. They run a very, very nice business and have been in business for 37 years in Amherst. So that's clearly very successful.

It was interesting to realize how Kiran continued to add to her knowledge base and skill sets. The same way volunteering for arts events in Amherst gave her the skills to become co-director of the Leverett Crafts and Arts community center, her work as co-director would then feed into her next endeavor with an increased knowledge of running an organization, budgeting, and the allocation of resources. Kiran seemed like a perpetual learner, eager to see what could happen next.

For Kiran, her family and friends were a core source of support for her work as an artist. Even when she was staying at home to take care of her children she was able to retain an identity as an artist.

There was one artist friend in particular who gave me this portable art kit. It was a little paper bag and inside was a really nice notebook, and a mini pencil, and a mini this, and some paints and, little things so that even—and this was before I had the studio space—even if you're just sitting down with the kids [...] or if you're in, you know, a local coffee shop, you just bring your little, portable, studio art kit. That was a good way to remember not to let go of being an artist and that you could still be creative.

Even more central to Kiran's support network was her extended family. It was only with the support of her husband and extended family that she is able to balance all the demands on her time and energy.

With her work at the Leverett Crafts and Arts she was able to witness and participate in various aspects of barter and gifting. The Leverett Crafts and Arts has a very flexible open structure where there are some artists with studios that would like to work cooperatively within the organization, and others that prefer to work independently, and Kiran is sensitive to both.

It's hard to trade paintings for [people's skills] but I have done that before, actually. There was one painting that somebody was really drawn to and he was a massage therapist. So we did a trade; he wanted the painting and valued it at whatever it was and exchanged massage sessions for that. And it was a very professional thing. There wasn't anything weird or awkward about it.

Even with in the larger scope of the Leverett Crafts and Arts center Karen was engaging with some surprising fundraising tactics. The main gallery of Leverett Crafts and Arts had a plywood floor that limited the kinds of activities that could happen there, however with a new hardwood floor, the galley could host a wide range of events from dance, to yoga, to performance.

One of the resident artists here is raising money pretty much on her own initiative. [...] She teaches West African style dance [at another location] and she has been teaching dance classes and donating 50 percent of the money towards the LCA. [...] At some point, we'd like to be able to hold those dance classes here. Right now, the floor, it's just a plywood floor that's been painted and it's not appropriate to dance barefoot on that floor. But there is a small community of people [here] who really love West African dance and the live drumming that happens with it. So, for her, it was inspiring to think that if there was a hardwood floor here, she could hold classes and this would be a good central location for those kinds of classes.

For the West African dance teacher, she was investing in a community asset, the floor of the gallery, because she recognized it would help everyone. By holding West African dance classes in the LCA, she could introduce a new audience to the artists and art making that happened in the gallery, she could also serve the more immediate local community of Leverett and Shutesbury, and she could enjoy a more central and consolidated practice of teaching dance where she also produced art.

Aptly, for a director of a community art space, Kiran had a broad holistic vision of who could be counted as an artist. Rather than being a gatekeeper for deciding who qualified as an artist and who didn't, the Leverett Craft and Arts Center's gallery, studio spaces, and classes were accepting of a broad definition of craftspeople and artists, just as Kiran was.

I think all people are creative and not everybody allows themselves to be in tune with it or to practice it or to commit to it. I think that a lot more people are artists than believe they are.

Kiran's own process of embracing the identity of an artist began with her high school art teacher, but needed to be reinforced periodically throughout her life. In addition to the support of family and friends, her own explorations were able to help Kiran solidify a vision for herself.

I'd gone to Mexico and lived with all these artists, and was traveling with my friend, and was just inspired and had that feeling, that natural high when you're doing something creative and you're involved in it, and it's working, and it's clicking, and it's flowing. And I wanted to do that more, all the time. I felt like I was capable of doing it, that I was [...] when I started considering myself an artist. It wasn't about being a successful artist and being able to make money off of my art; it was just feeling confident enough that I knew what that feeling was when things were working right in the creative process and that I had enough talent, or connection with it, or enough skills that I should continue trying and practicing.

For Kiran's process, she was able to embrace her identity as an artist once she experienced the creative energy of a creative life, and experienced the agency that enabled. By experiencing something rich and rewarding to her, that enabled Kiran to decide that she could pursue being an artist as a pathway for her life.

Even after deciding to become an artist in Mexico, to later claim a public identity or title as an artist was a complicated process for Kiran. Ultimately, like her trip to Mexico, it was the creative experience that allowed Kiran to define herself as an artist and claim that identity.

I think of myself as an artist but that's a really tricky one because I don't know how many other people would consider me an artist. [...] I think art can mean so many different things. So for me, creating... even creating a beautiful space, curating a show, dancing—I mean, when I wasn't having time to work on paintings and art, and [...] the kids were really young—for me, I realized just going out for one hour to a dance class or for a few hours, to a club [...]. And, you know, I still... I have to be careful. I don't really appreciate when people claim a lot of titles and do it lightly, so [...] I take it pretty seriously when you say those things. That's why it's sort of a heavy question. Are you an artist? That's a big title and so is a [calling one's self a] dancer. And I'm not a professional dancer. I'm not a professional artist. Am I? But for me, I realized that just going out and dancing was this outlet for this creative process. And so I sort of feel like, yes, I am an artist because I dance. I understand rhythm and I am not a musician, I don't play a lot of instruments, but there was this creative thing. So it was an artistic experience for me to dance to the music and to express myself through that art form.

Kiran came to the conclusion that being an artist was less about how other people might define someone else, and instead was about how an individual experienced the creative process and the artistic experience. For Kiran, art was about expressing one's self through an art form. The process of becoming an artist was learning how to acquire the skills and tools one needed to express herself through various mediums and gaining the confidence to continue learning and continue practicing the various forms art could take. For Kiran, a practicing artist was a growing artist.

Supported by her family, friends, and community, Kiran also gave back to those same groups through her work and her art, which wove together into a kind a fabric that Kiran embodied. Rather than having a day job, and a night identity as an artist, Kiran embodied the creative process of being an artist in all of her endeavors. The loss of Kiran left a large hole in the fabric of her multiple communities as was evidenced by her memorial service that filled a hall at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Jeanne Doulliard

At the age of 17, Jeanne left home and entered a Catholic religious community and spent the next 17 years of her life there. She counts herself as very lucky because through the religious community she received an education and was able to continue on to college, something that would not have been supported in her home, where the one son was identified as going to college and supported, and the three daughters were on their own.

As a young student, Jeanne did not really know what to pursue. A professor suggested biology and that is the route she followed, and when she graduated she became a teacher, first in a middle school, then at her college in the medical technology division. While she was there she decided to take an art class. Remembering a school field trip to Sturbridge Village and seeing a potter craft a pitcher, and how enchanted she was with the transformation of a lump of clay into the vessel, she decided on a pottery class.

I'd taken art in high school, and I wasn't particularly good, and didn't even work in clay in those years. But I guess there was always this kind of attraction to art, but it was underneath, and I wasn't particularly good at it, so it sort of just flowed in and out of my life until I started this class in New Hampshire. I really enjoyed working with clay. And I was patient with it, you know, it was a very difficult process. I loved the wheel and so, from there, which was sort of like the very beginning, came the development of a passion for clay.

This first class ignited a latent "attraction to art" and gave Jeanne access to, not only let it flow in and out of her life, but grab hold and participate in its creation. While Jeanne was "pretty good" at biology, and managed to secure jobs teaching. She didn't really enjoy teaching, and never really had a passion for biology. However, once

Jeanne was introduced to working in clay, she realized she discovered something special.

Eventually Jeanne took a leave of absence and moved out to Colorado where she met a couple who were teachers at a college in Denver and worked with them for several years.

[I]t was there that I really shifted my whole orientation in terms of the future because I fell in love with clay. They were [...] just great teachers, and I learned an enormous amount. Cried a lot, but learned a lot, because the critiques could be pretty intense. But you know, to this day I can't thank them enough for what they did for me, because I really developed a certain eye, and a certain style, and a certain sense from that experience.

Eventually Jeanne was able to find work at the local V.A. hospital where she only worked weekends and that allowed her to have weekdays free where she apprenticed with the two teachers.

[I]t was perfect for me because I was free during the week. So I asked them if I could be somewhat like an apprentice for them. In other words, hang around as many days as they would let me, see the whole process. You know, making clay, recycling clay, doing anything they wanted me to do. Clean... I didn't care, because I would be in that atmosphere, and I would be able to listen in on classes, and I would continue to develop my understanding of clay. So I did that for a whole year and that was fabulous.

While in Denver, Jeanne joined the Denver Potters' Guild, a collaborative of potters where they shared studio space, kilns, and materials. And while Jeanne feels she was still a beginner, she was surrounded by people with many different experiences and orientations to working with clay. All of these people added to Jeanne's education and development as a potter, they all became teachers.

While Jeanne was in Denver she formally separated from the religious community and married her husband. They moved to North Carolina where her husband had friends there. They saw a house for sale on the ocean that had a kiln,

and in a flurry of optimistic excitement, they borrowed money in addition to a mortgage, rented out the upstairs, and somehow managed to make it work.

It was in Beaufort, North Carolina that Jeanne decided to declare that she was going to be a potter. She set up a small shop right on the water near a tourist area, but when she found out about a gallery owner moving away and she created a consignment business for potters called Handscapes Studio, which still exists in Beaufort.

[W]e had an arrangement where, if the person selling their work, worked in the shop, then they got less money taken out from their sales. And, amazingly, it worked. It just amazes me because, I [had] no experience in any of this. But obviously, I could do it. So I just did it without thinking much. And the thing that I am so proud of is that that place is still open. It's called Handscapes Gallery. My studio name is Handscapes Studio. The woman I handed it over to, because it was a consignment business, I didn't really sell it, I just gave it to her, has run it for almost 20-something years.

It is interesting to witness Jeanne's movement from discovering an interest, developing a passion through learning with the right teachers, finding community, and then developing her own community through the consignment business through a kind of cooperative model and a sense that the store is owned by the people who sell and work there.

After Jeanne had a child, they decided to move closer to family and to a more manageable financial situation. Jeanne focused on her daughter and being accessible for her, so for the next four years she was not able to return to pottery. They moved back to New England and ended up in Springfield and bought a house. All the while maintaining the vision of eventually building a studio space. When her daughter entered first grade, Jeanne and her husband saved up enough and were able to fix

up the property and create a really big studio where Jeanne worked as a fulltime potter for seven years.

The rigor of being a fulltime potter was very challenging, even as it was rewarding. Jeanne recalls the time fondly, even as she admits that the pace eventually was too strenuous. .

[...] I burned myself out working too hard. I look back on those years as having been really happy ones. We worked like crazy. I don't know how we ever did it, but we would do shows on weekends and my husband would come, and my daughter would come, and later we got a dog and our puppy would come... so we did all of that together, and that was a really good thing to do. Then, gradually, I sort of eased out of the full time pottery by working part time, and then we ended up moving up here [Bernardston]. And in a way that was a big loss for me, because I lost the studio.

Jeanne focused on working a five-day a week job in Springfield and trying to figure out a way to bring working with clay back into her life. After a job change, she lost her job at a Visitors' Center and found herself unemployed.

Jeanne met Pam and her mother, and when she was employed by the visitors' center, she would work at their Eleven South Gallery in Bernardston when she could. But once she was unemployed she was able to make an arrangement with Pam where she could do some prep work for Pam's pottery, make molds, and some relief work; run the gallery if people came in; answer the phone, and in exchange Jeanne has use of the shared studio and is able to sell her work in the gallery. She works part time which feels much more manageable for her than trying to go back to fulltime production work.

I think for now it's a great arrangement for me. I have no idea where the future is with regards to clay work. I don't know where it's going to lead me, but for now it's just fine. So I come here two days a week and so far, that's enough. I mean, I'm amazingly busy. I don't know what I did when I worked. So it's fine, because when I stopped working full time in clay is when I made

one very important decision for myself. I would never work in clay in order to pay the bills of the house, because I am just not the kind of person that can control myself. I mean, it's like I pushed and pushed and pushed so hard that the latter part of those 7 years I was getting sick every year, just because I was pushing too much. And so finally, it dawned on me, duh, that maybe there was a different way of looking at this. That it wasn't going to be a hobby, it would be a business, but it was going to be less intense. And as long as I could pay my own bills and make a little profit and have a little bit of money, that would be what I would do. And that is what's happened now, and that's working out really well for me because then I don't have the stress, or I don't put the stress on myself.

For Jeanne, a part of her quality of life stems from an ability to create a balance that blends her passion for clay, her business acumen, and yet enables her to maintain her health and stress levels.



Figure 16: Jeanne's Plate

Now, with a balance of her work in the gallery and studio, she has discovered another passion, writing. She took a course at Springfield Technical Community College and had a teacher that really encouraged her. After the class her teacher agreed to get together and write for two hours a week. Now, writing "has come to be

extremely important, equally as important to me in terms of times spent as doing clay work.”

So isn't that interesting that my early life was science, but that was not really who I was at all. And I had to take all those years to figure out just what my real orientation was. And I feel that now I have discovered that. What I do with that and where it goes, I have no idea. But that doesn't matter to me right now. What's important is that I do it.

It is interesting see how much of Jeanne's work is a kind of faith based endeavor. She finds something that speaks to her, or she is guided in a direction, and she pursues it to see where it will lead. She talks about not knowing where things will lead to, but “that doesn't matter to me right now.” Instead, she is waiting and being receptive to the possibilities that reveal themselves.

I'm trying now to approach my life... not to set it up too much, and just wait and see, because I'm always shocked at the way things happen. How this woman [the writing teacher] came into my life, I don't have any idea why we started talking about this and just all of a sudden, every week, we meet, you know? And there's this huge gift for me saying, “This is something important. You've gotta do this.” And the same with being with Pam, having a setup here [at the studio/gallery]. It was an answer. I was searching, I wasn't sure what direction it was going to take me, and so I'm trying as much as possible to put all of this, like, the rest of my life, in this kind of mode of waiting and seeing. So I don't do anything with my poems. They're all mine. They don't go out in public yet, but I don't know. I just don't know what's going to happen with that, and it doesn't really matter so much any more. [...] I always had to see into the future. I always had to know what was coming. Otherwise, it made me very nervous. Now, to be in a place where, I'm not perfect at this yet, but overall, I can just let it happen and see all these incredible things that come into my life.

Jeanne talked about how her decision at 17 to join a religious community of Catholic women was one of the best decisions of her life. She didn't really know what to do at the time, but joining the religious community gave her an education and helped her gain confidence interacting with people. And, it seems to have instilled her with a sense of spirituality even if it has taken her a long time to recognize it.

Jeanne talks about her sense of spirituality as being different from the way many people might envision spirituality.

[...] it's only really lately that I'm moving into my own understanding of my life as a spiritual life because that's a very awkward thing. It's so misinterpreted, this whole religious, spiritual stuff. So many people hang onto it like a tightrope, that they just see it as their saving grace. And really, I don't think it's meant to be a saving grace at all. I think it's meant to be a kick in the pants and sort of just explode everything that we've thought about. And then the pieces sort of start tinkling back together again, and they form into something that you might have thought about, but in ways that you never could have envisioned. And to me, that's what it's all about. It's a breaking open, not a hanging onto. And so, it's helping me to orient my life in a whole different way, especially in these last few years.

Jeanne sees her life as a long process of finding her way back to herself. She spoke about running away from herself and realizing something wasn't right, and to a degree that seemed to follow her through her various permutations, and she admits that 20 years from now she may look back and recognize, "Oh, my God, there's so much I didn't know, even then."

By surviving all of her life's experiences, Jeanne is able to see the thing that continues to drive her forward, her spirituality, as a gift. It is what allows her to enter into a process of letting go. "We've all got stuff we've got to deal with, but the more we liberate ourselves from it, the freer we can be. So I've always yearned for freedom." Both Jeanne and her husband came from religious communities and they have a similar orientation to this journey, where they place themselves out into the world and allow for opportunities to reveal themselves. When I asked if she saw herself as brave, she preferred to think of herself as courageous, as willing to do things that seemed crazy, or outside of peoples' expectations, to see what could be accomplished and have faith that something would emerge.

Jeanne, in her pursuit of knowing more about herself, seems to have intuitively directed her into the pursuit of community, whether that was with the women's religious community, small groups of potters or guilds, cooperative galleries, and her current cooperative gallery and studio arrangement.

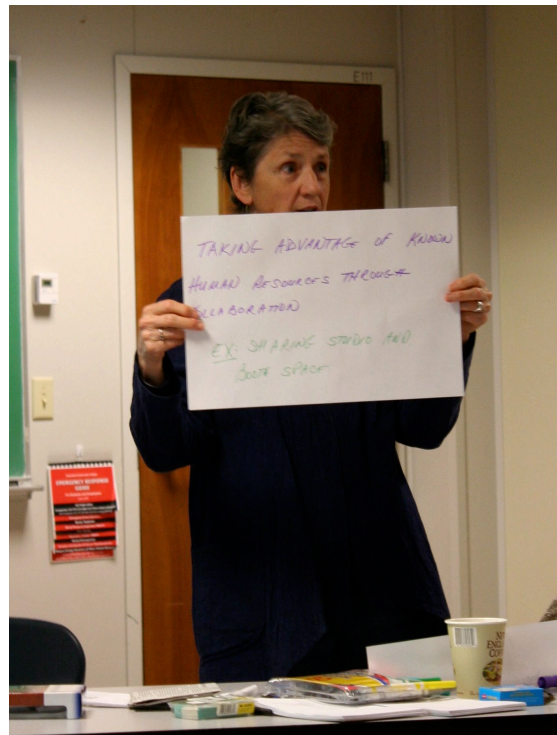


Figure 17: Jeanne Douillard²

The communities have enabled Jeanne to pursue things that were important to her, or allow her to have experiences that would be able to inform her later life directions and possibilities. Without access to, or pursuing a community, Jeanne may not have been able to receive a college education, pursue biology, find employment, and discover her passion for clay. While in retrospect it seems like all of the pathways that Jeanne took in her life were logical and fit together in a seemingly seamless arc of development, she stresses how many of the big decisions were leaps into the unknown, whether it was joining the religious community,

marrying her husband, relocating for friendship without secured employment, taking risks despite the financial hardship even at an older age when it seemed many people did not continue taking those kinds of risks. Jeanne mentions the religious communities impacting some of this, where both she and her husband had their basic needs provided for by their religious communities, and after leaving the communities, it was like starting from nothing, so despite their age, they had the freedom (and challenge) to make great leaps and grand gestures that allowed them to move and grow, and to become the people they are today.

Karen L. Ducey

Karen was always making crafts and art as she grew up, and when it came time to go to college, she had accepted the general message that she could not make money or a living as an artist so she needed to go to college. Simultaneously, while a senior in high school, her father was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Therefore, throughout college, Karen was not sure she would be able to graduate because of what was happening in her home life. Unlike some of her peers, she did not plan a career around her degree, but took classes that she enjoyed and had an interest in. She ended up staying through to finish school, ultimately majoring in geography with a focus on rural land use management. Throughout college Karen continued crafting and making art.

In many ways, Karen's father's illness had a major impact on shaping her direction in life. She really yearned to travel, but also wanted to spend time with her father who was given approximately 6 months to live.

I thought about not going to school but he said you can't put your life on hold because, what if I live 10 more years? So I ended up going to school in Worcester at Clark University, which was about an hour and a half from where my dad lived so I could go back and forth and visit with him and stuff. So in that sense I did not put my life on hold. But after college I did not do the traveling that I wanted to do because he ended up fighting his cancer for almost 8 years. So after college a lot of my friends were traveling and doing things before they settled into their life. I hung around here for the most part. [...] But I do not regret not taking off because I got to spend some great time with my dad and I actually went on a road trip with him across the country with him and my brother after college. And that was fun, but in some ways I do think that I put some things on hold.

It is impressive that Karen, at a relatively young age, was able to have the foresight to prioritize what was important for her and her family. After taking a year off to

travel with her father and independently, Karen ended up staying in Worcester doing part-time jobs while also exploring how to simultaneously create a business where she could sell her crafts. Ultimately she realized that if she wanted to make a living with her art and craft that she would need to focus more of her time on it.

Karen first moved to Amherst, Massachusetts to go to graduate school to become a teacher, but found that the geography degree didn't blend easily into high school teaching degrees, so she was not able to easily pursue that path without additional undergraduate work for prerequisites. She was also having a hard time finding a place to live, however her boyfriend had been living in the area and together they started going to various big collective houses to ask if there were any open rooms. She finally found an open room with a great welcoming community right in the center of Amherst.

It was this amazing house with this amazing old woman and she was the landlady and she was providing a place for young artists to develop and grow. Her husband was born in the house and grew up in the house and owned it his entire life and he passed away the month that I moved in. So I never met him. I only knew that the house had been in his family for over 100 years and it is an old historical house in downtown Amherst and she lives in Hatfield. And she let those kids, some of them have been there almost 10 years now, and she sort of let them have their way with the place. She feels it has been a nurturing environment for artist types for a long time, so she let us do restoration on the house. I taught myself how to tile so I could do the kitchen floor and I did the kitchen floor and a bunch of people were involved in different parts of the renovation of the house and it was a great place while I was there.

The landlady would pay the tenants for doing renovations and Karen was able to stay at home and move easily between doing her work and working on the house. Eventually, Karen's boyfriend moved in with her and aside from the bedroom, all their spaces were shared spaces. So while Karen did continue crafting and art, she

was not able to really focus on the work on a large scale and for any additional income she worked part time jobs house cleaning and house painting.

Karen, throughout her interview, expressed a willingness or aptitude to travel or live on a barebones budget, sometimes working as she traveled to continue her journey. This flexibility was certainly an asset and allowed her to travel when she might not have otherwise been able to, but she also lacked some of the more expensive equipment needed to make her craft business viable.

I didn't really get serious about selling things until a year after my dad died. So that would've been about two years ago. I didn't have a computer or a camera, and when he passed away I ended up with his laptop and his camera which allowed me to begin selling things online. So that is when I opened my Etsy shop. So for the last two years I have really tried making a go of supporting myself off the business.

By leaving her some key tools to shift her focus onto a modern permutation of her business endeavor Karen's father allowed her to further her vision for her craft work. Karen and her boyfriend moved away from the communal house and found a house in Shutesbury where they could have more space. Simultaneously, Karen reevaluated her part time employment.

My last part-time job was production, doing sewing for another local business. It was sort of assembly-line sewing so I would sit there for four or five hours and sew the same thing and I would sew hundreds of them in five or six hours, which is good for income, but it is a little mind numbing and sort of physically wearing to sit at a sewing machine and sew for six hours straight through without any break and then come home and have to do my own sewing. It was sort of killing my motivation to do any sewing on my own business. In that sense it was good for me to quit, and when I evaluate how much I was getting paid, and the fact that it was a half hour commute each way, and I was really only working 10 hours a week, and when I sat down and thought about it, I thought I could make that much more money in my business if I could dedicate two days a week to my business instead of having to go in and dedicate it to someone else's business.

For Karen this realization was particularly important so she could focus on the winter holidays when she makes a lot of sales. Each year she hopes to generate enough income from the holidays to carry her through January, February, and March, though she recognizes she may need to get a part time job during those months.

So I will keep my Etsy store going and hopefully that will be enough to pay bills and maybe it is possible that I will sell tons this holiday season and maybe I will have enough to get through part of the winter. So my partner also works in the arts and he is a sound engineer for a band that travels around the country and they are seeing some moderate national success. So they have been touring very hard and he has been gone for months and months, which is a bummer, but someone in this house is at least making some money. But his work is not stable. When the band is not touring there is no money coming in so we have both had to learn to really budget the money that we have coming in from the band because he often also does not have any work in January, February, and March. [...] I have had a variety of part time jobs and then we grow a lot of food. My boyfriend makes a lot more money than I do and I pay and even share all the bills that, if I did not have my boyfriend, I don't think that I would eat besides what we grow and we are not really growing enough for me to eat on for a whole year. So I am really not surviving just on my art alone.

Karen and her boyfriend manage a balance between artists that allows them to continue pursuing their passions, but also enabling them to survive through the lean months.

In spite of their tight budget, Karen and her boyfriend are able to prioritize spending money on things that are important to them, like locally grown food.

We also have a lot of other friends who do farming and I feel really blessed that I have access to locally grown food and organic food, and food is one thing in my life that I splurge on. We eat vegetarian and we eat as much local food as we possibly can so that is the one thing where I will always splurge and spend the extra \$.50 for organic local broccoli versus conventional broccoli from California. So I never get new clothes. Sneakers that I have I have had for like eight years and I wear everything down to the bone as much as I possibly can and food is the one thing that I splurge on. And I feel that other people who live, say in Springfield or Worcester, where I come

from, where there is a lot of economically depressed neighborhoods, and that those people do not have as much access to good local food or organically grown food.

While Karen lives frugally, she still feels like she has what she needs. She does not pursue food assistance because, "I feel like those programs are for people that really have less than I do. When I hear myself say [that] it seems funny cause for the last 10 years I've been operating on an income of about \$10,000 a year which definitely qualifies me for food programs and stuff." Karen is active in a trading and gifting economy where locally grown food is the thing of value.

Sometimes it [locally grown food] is gifted and sometimes we trade with friends. I have traded with some of the farmers of the Farmer's market and so it is mostly trade or gift, and we gift some of what we grow as well. This past year we grew over 300 bulbs of garlic and we grow kale and chive and salad greens and carrots and tomatoes and some herbs. We grow lots of mint and some of it is hanging up behind you. If we had more sun in the yard, and if we had the space and the sun I would try to grow food year round, and if there was room for greenhouse, I would put one up. We grow raspberries and there are wild blueberries on a path near the woods here that I often go pick in the summer.

These kinds of tactics allow Karen to feel like there is possibility, that there is a community that is supporting the kinds of lifestyle choices that Karen is making when it comes to focusing on craft and living creatively on a very low monetary income.

When Karen was growing up, her mother had a very limited income and eventually carried a lot of debt for a long time until she inherited some money from her parents and was able to pull herself out of 20 years of debt. Karen had \$50,000 in student loans and her mother was also able to pay off Karen's loans.

It was life altering. [...] If it weren't for that I don't think I would be able to do this right now and I don't think I would be able to be focusing full-time on my business. And if I had \$400 a month and student loan payments, which is

what I paid those first two years, I could not be doing this and I would have to have some kind of regular full-time steady job with income. Just to deal with that.

Karen's father and mother both gifted her the ability to focus on her craft business.

With Karen's current monetary income, the original loan repayment seems staggering. Karen's mother's gift allows her the freedom to live a lifestyle that, from the outside, looks like poverty, but experienced within Karen's household, feels manageable and unhindered by the weight of debt. Similarly, when Karen's father passed away, Karen and her boyfriend had an old rusted out pickup truck that had just failed inspection. Karen's father left her enough money to buy a new car, and she is saving a little that is left over for an eventual down payment on a house.

Within Karen's vision of how she wants to live, is an awareness, perhaps from watching her mother, about how she wants to avoid debt and she is savvy enough to recognize that on a limited income, each dollar saved adds up.

Every few months I pull out about 200 bucks or something for car insurance, which I pay annually, and we save a lot of money that way. And I have done a lot of things and I will pay a lot of things in lump sums and save small amounts of money. And with the car insurance we might save 50 bucks or so. And we buy in bulk, and any time I can pay for something in bulk, I will always try to do that.

Karen also participates in clothing swap parties where people trade their clothes for other people's clothes, and there is an active recycling of household items from and to friends that are ending a lease, or moving into the area.

Karen also integrates a recycling ethic into her art and craft work, where recycled materials become integral to the work, and when she needs to purchase new materials, she utilizes every scrap so that none of it is sent to the trash.

The T-shirts I get at the thrift store, and wallets and other bags I use new material, but for packaging my next-door neighbor collects vintage vinyl and he orders it online and gets it shipped here and they are always wrapped in bubble wrap, so I collect all of his bubble wrap and for two years I have never spent a penny on bubble wrap and it is all secondhand. I save scraps of fabric and now I am making cards. I am sewing fabric onto cards and it is all scraps so I'm not throwing anything away. I am going to be doing what I call chaos cards, and I am saving all my snips of thread from when I make wallets and things and I am going to sew them onto paper and put mesh over the sew. So different things, and I try not to throw anything away for anything. I use a polyester stabilizer for the things like the wallets and I have scraps that are nearly exactly bookmark size so I am going to start doing fiber bookmarks. So I do buy some new materials for some of the stuff that I use. Whatever I am buying there is literally no scraps going in the trash. Like even the ends of zippers, I save the ends when I am going to sew them into a wallet and I will save that for another project.

Karen makes use of all the materials she collects, and when she feels overwhelmed by the material collecting, she will do a larger scale project that uses up the over stocked supplies. It is wonderful to hear how Karen's creations then spawn other creations, how the scraps of one item become the foundation for another.



Figure 18: Bureau of Scraps

In large part because of Karen's attention to finances, food production and acquisition, craft work that wastes nothing, and the fortune or privilege to live debt

free, Karen does not feel impoverished. But Karen also sees herself as part of a larger community of people who are choosing similar lifestyles.

I don't feel the people around here are bursting at the seams with all kinds of money, but I do not feel like this is an impoverished area because I don't think that I am unique in the sense that I grow my own food, and I barter and trade for things, and I save scraps of material for projects and things. I think that this region is very rich with resources and resourceful people. They do anything and everything they can to live very fulfilled lives even if it is not [by] monetary fulfillment.

When Karen sees Franklin County, she sees a community where, while there is not a lot of ethnic diversity, there is a “strong sense of community between people of higher economic situations and lower.” The local food movement and the arts are a common way to engage and break down some of the economic segregation. In Franklin County where the farmers’ markets accept food assistance and many arts events are free or affordable, there is not as great a disparity in access to local food or local art as can happen in other regions.

Karen is particularly aware that one of the assets of the region is the consciousness of the consumer about how they spend their money and giving them an opportunity to support local artists the same way the support local farmers. She has joined the Artisans of Western Mass to network with other artists, but to also create a movement to raise awareness of how to support local artists.

I think that the Artisans of Western Mass is going to be critical in the next few years in really shifting people's perceptions of buying gifts and buying objects. And I feel like this [...] is a community where this could start thriving and really be an example for others [in] other communities. People here are open enough and conscious enough about the decisions on how they spend their money that if they are shown how many opportunities there are out there [for] supporting local artists, that inevitably we can make that work and we can get away from box store department shopping.

Karen can envision a community that supports its local farmers and artists by highlighting the conscious choices available to them. She can also see this as a model for other communities to emulate. People have choices on how they spend their money, Karen embodies that in her own life, and hopes her involvement with the Artisans of Western Mass will help other people see how they can make their own choices.

[...] not only can they keep their dollars local, but they can purchase totally unique gifts which in my mind is what gift giving should be. Giving has become so commercialized in so many ways and it is sort of ironic that I am talking about selling my work as gifts because it is a commercial endeavor, but there is something very different about buying a totally unique handcrafted bag from a local artisan versus going into Target and buying a bag that literally thousands, and thousands, and thousands of the same bag have been made somewhere else. And they are for sale all over the country. And only a small amount of the money that you spend on that will actually stay in the community. There are so many reasons to buy artist made and handmade.

In addition to retaining money within a local community, Karen also emphasizes the authenticity of giving a gift that is not a generic item found anywhere in the country, and instead is unique and native to a specific place. Karen is also enthusiastic about the 350 Project where people who want to maintain a diverse local business community should earmark \$150 a month to spend in local establishments.

It is a national movement. And I am all about this project, but I do not have \$150 a month. And I think it is a great guide for people who are making the median income or the average in that their dollars are really shaping local economy. I have so few dollars to spend. I don't spend \$150 a month with three local businesses, but pretty much every penny that I spend on anything is either through local artists, or local farms, or local thrift stores, or secondhand stores.

Karen also sees her own virtual Etsy storefront as another form of a local business economy that can blend the convenience of shopping online with supporting local artists and artisans.

I love to make things. I love using my hands and I feel like, in this postindustrial world, we have gotten, in this country especially, so far away from tangible things and so much of what goes on in this country economically is just the shuffling of paper and I don't see any inherent value in that. My parents, when I was a kid, collected antiques. Not high-end antiques, my dad had an antique tool collection, and I think I learned about the value of the quality of things that are made with integrity and purpose, and I have always just liked making things. So I think that that sort of steers me in that sense. And then I really honestly value my time [more] than the dollars in my bank account, or the fancy clothes and shoes that money could buy. So I would rather be really poor and be able to have an afternoon to stare and watch the leaves blowing in the wind. Now I'm making myself some kind of crazy. The concept of going to a Monday through Friday job just sounds torturous to me. Like if something comes up on a Tuesday and I want to go to it, like say going to visit my grandmother, or going to do whatever I feel like, I should be able to do that. I feel that my personal life should come before my work life. And for a long time I thought maybe I just had no motivation and I was lazy, but I realized that pouring my energy into someone else's project was just draining on me emotionally and that there's nothing to be gained except dollars, and when I got past caring about the dollars it didn't make any sense to go to a job to work just for the sake of working.

Karen labels this as a post-industrial world where people are free to create their own visions of how life should be prioritized and what is assigned value. For Karen, spending time with her boyfriend when he comes home after traveling for two months is more important than maintaining steady employment. She has numerous examples of friends who went off to seemingly good paying jobs after college and ended up tens of thousands of dollars in debt because they had no control over their spending or costs of living. In Franklin County, Karen can make those kinds of choices in ways that make her quality of life stronger.

Karen's vision for life is one that includes an ethic of self-provisioning, community, healthy local food, family, and an environmental and economic based recycling. While Karen is highly aware of her monetary finances and budget, the acquisition of monetary wealth is not something that drives her actions.

I think having lost my dad at such a young age has really pulled all of this really clearly into perspective, that life is super short. And I want to be able to do and hang out with the people that I love, and having my own job where I'm the boss lets me do [that] and give that a priority.

Karen's loss of her father has inspired an embrace for life and life's experiences, yet she has done this responsibly and in a way that seems to balance passion and love, with awareness and foresight. She knows where the challenges will come, and also knows how she can save up for, or pursue short-term employment to overcome those shortfalls without losing sight of what she holds as important and crucial in her life.

Don and Judi Campbell

Don and Judi live in Northfield, Massachusetts in a house off the grid powered minimally by solar panels and at times a generator. They are Quakers and their religious practices and ethics feature prominently in their perspective and motivations. For Don and Judi their Quaker practices help to reinforce a sense of community, working collaboratively with others, and an awareness of their connection to the environment. Judi is the visual artist, at various times in her life crafting cast sculptures, but more recently focusing on puppetry. Don is a wonderful storyteller, Morris dancer, and folklorist, in addition to being an entrepreneurial innovator. Throughout the research project Don and Judi were their own collaborative team, therefore it felt fitting and respectful of their relationship to interview them together.

Don and Judi's original house burned down in 1999 and that traumatic event is still tangible and has profound impact in their lives, but it manifests in surprisingly life reaffirming ways.

Judi: One of the things we lost was our wedding certificate, because we were Quakers [Quakers have a certificate rather than a license], and so that burned. So we had a meeting for worship here after the house was built, [...with] Quakers, and people signed it, so in a way, it was supposed to...

Don: That's how the Quakers' wedding certificate is done. It's like you are marrying yourselves in front of the Divine. It's not like somebody's marrying you. And so everybody who's there is the witness, and they all sign it. So you have this big thing with everybody's signatures. Usually, Meetings that have any history of it are smart enough to make a copy of the original. Framingham never had a wedding at their Meeting before, so they forgot to do that. So when we had the house fire, we lost that.

At one point after the fire Don and Judi's friends tried to recreate the original wedding certificate, but trying to track down all the original wedding guests from a different Meeting House from a different time was too challenging. So instead, Don and Judi had a rededication to one another and that was documented with all of their current friends from their Meeting House in Leverett, Massachusetts. Each member of the community signed the document, which for Don and Judi now has as much meaning as their original document. Both Don and Judi joke about their experience with a fire, that there are easier ways to get a nicer house, that you cut down on the things you are accumulating, and that you join a club of exclusive members.

Don: People at the club are people who've had fires. And of course [...] there's a lot of societies within that are healing societies or whatnot that are based on, if you've had this problem, then you're in. And [later] you're the ones that people have turned to for help when they're on the verge of becoming one of you, you know? So that there's a... it's sort of a mutual help society that, even though a lot of it is just... all you can really do is emotional support, but that's worth a lot.

Don talks about the club of victims of house fires as a mutual help society, a kind of emotional resource to help people recover from a tragedy. Once a person experiences a house fire, they receive support from other people who have experienced the same thing, and then, after the household recovers, they then help other people who have just experienced this kind of tragedy.

Don and Judi's new house is a beautiful passive solar design that has tall two story windows looking out over their pasture. On their property, Don and Judi have Dexter cows that in many ways are like pets. Both Don and Judi give them names and become familiar with their personalities. One of the cows is used for milking by

a neighbor in a barter arrangement, and the other cows eventually become food, which Don and Judi try to balance with treating the animals humanely and with love and care.



Figure 19: Don and Judi

Don grew up in Warwick, Massachusetts and went to Greenfield Community College, then the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, and got a job dispatching busses. That eventually took him down to Florida. After graduate school in North Carolina, another Quaker introduced Don to Judi.

Judi was a technical writer, and she was a member of the Boston Area Guild of Puppetry. When she became a Quaker she decided to embark on a project make large-scale puppets of endangered animals. These puppets were designed to be

worn by adults or children and manipulated while on a march. She made one puppet a year and held workshops where people could volunteer to help construct the puppets. The puppets were brought out at the Quaker Yearly Meeting and for parades and community celebrations. Almost all of the materials used in the construction of the puppets were scrap materials, much of it donated by a cousin who does interior design and has access to lots of leftover fabric pieces.

Judi: And when you're inside of a puppet, it's like you lose your own person and you become whatever the puppet is. So if it's an animal, it really helps you to think more about these endangered animals.

For Judi the giant one or two person puppets were more than symbols of endangered animals, they were meditation pieces where the people helping create the puppet, and the people who became the puppet all were drawn closer to the creature they were creating. It was a way to gain a greater awareness of the movement to protect endangered species and to anthropomorphize an experience of that animal as a conscious living thing.

Don is currently teaching lead laws to contractors. Judi handles the photographs and certificates. She had taken several hundred photographs of contractors' faces and was enchanted by their faces. She then used Photoshop to create collages of discrete features, one print of only facial hair, one of contractors' smiles. She calls the series The Contractors' Dilemma because of the challenge of working around lead in homes.

Don and Judi's house is a mile and a half from the nearest utility pole, so the location dictates living off the grid. When they originally bought the property the electric company wanted to charge them \$70,000 to run a wire to the house. So all of

their electricity is generated by solar, and they have a backup generator for the wintertime or cloudy days when the sunlight doesn't last long enough. Don became involved with starting PV², a worker cooperative solar installation company. The connections between a workers' cooperative and Quaker Meeting are very clear in Don's mind.

Don: And for a worker co-op especially, that becomes God, in the greater process. It's never about yourself. Once you've offered up an idea, it belongs to the group. And the test is whether it fits [or] how it fits with that mission statement. So you have to redo it, especially early on. You have to redo it a couple times a year until you're satisfied, as it develops. And then, you have to hold yourself to that. It's hard to get people to not think about their own interests, not because they don't want to be bigger minded, but [because] they don't have the practice or the experience. When you go to enough Quaker business meetings, you learn. You watch it happen over some issues that are very hot for people. It can be divisive. And you see people deal with it in extraordinary ways. And so you learn by exposure and being there.

Don transfers the skills he has acquired as a Quaker, and earlier than that while living on a commune, to the cooperative world where he has instilled an ethic of consensus building and patient and mindful revision, change, and dedication. While Don is no longer involved with PV² he is glad to see it continue to be successful and still hold true to the mission and ethics that it created. Don talks about himself as an innovator, someone who loves to start projects and is happy to see them grow into various permutations across the region.

For years Don was the maintainer of the maypole for a group of Morris dancers, and during a period when he was traveling and unable to attend the maypole celebration, the group came and retrieved the pole from his house for the event. At the end of the ceremony the group forgot to return the pole to Don's house

and left it planted in the ground on the town commons, and a few days latter the town public works came and put the pole through a chipper.

Don: And I finally got back in town, and I was horrified. So we went out to Quaker Meeting on the other side of a beaver pond that's behind the Meeting House and we went and found a tree. Judi was the one who learned which tree was ready to give itself, and that's the tree we took. And I knew these guys needed to do something sort of ritualistic, so I say, "Okay, I know what you guys like. Bring some good single malt. Not cheap stuff, good single malt." And so we gave the tree a healthy drink and then toasted it. And you could see the audience go, "Wait a minute, that's good whiskey!" But it made it take. And so now they're protecting that tree. Because that's really how intact folk communities... that's how things happen, [it] is that so-and-so always does that part, and nobody else ever has to think about it, right? And the minute that person goes out, then some of it falls apart. And to me, that was a really neat thing, because it meant that the Friends had gotten that way [and taken on that role], that, okay, it's May Day. And people just... they know what they're going to do. I mean, you have to have some discussion about how many dozen eggs are we going to buy, but it's not like, is it going to happen?

By creating a ritual out of the recreation/consecration of the new maypole, Don helped cement a shared responsibility of the community to the pole. Caring for the maypole became a community responsibility that has incorporated all of the Friends who attended the ceremony. The ceremony introduced a folk tradition into the community lexicon where everybody has a role in the responsibility for maintaining the May Day practices. He introduced the maypole as a thing of sacrifice and value, how it was not just a mere object, but also a once living thing that has taken on a new role. Don talked about his sense of purposeful attention to how people interact responsibly with nature by telling a story about New College in England.

Don: New College was established about 1325 [1379]. It was new then, because there were other colleges already there. In the 1800's they needed to redo all the wood in the Great Hall and they had long 12x12 oak beams. And they're thinking, where are we going to find this now? Somebody mentioned it to the forester, who said, "Well, [when the college was built they] planted the trees to replace them! They're right out here in the woods!" They had planted the oaks [to refurbish the building] when they built the building. And

that kind of thinking is the stuff about working with trees that has always meant a lot to me. And pretty much wherever I've lived, I've planted some kind of tree, for better or worse... And when we married, we got a white oak on the grounds at the Meeting in Framingham. All this guy needs is an excuse to have a tree planted someplace, and he'll be there.

Don shares with Judi a devout attention to nature and an ethic of respect in how he interacts with it. Don and Judi's sense of environmentalism seems rooted in a utilitarian approach where they recognize people interact with nature, that there are impacts when one cuts down a tree or sends a cow to the butcher, but there are also ways to mitigate the impact one's actions have on the environment. This environmental connection that they share also weaves with their sense of spirituality.

Don: Part of what we share is that inner thing. That, back in the day, back to 100 some years ago, when George Fox [one of the founding members of the Quakers] one of the leading lights at the beginning, was around, they talked about that... the inner light, already they were talking about that. That the presence in our midst would inform you, you know, that the final test is not something that's written, it's what happens inside of you. But you need the group, and you need something else outside to help you keep from going off the deep end.

The inner light is a kind of moral compass for Don and Judi. They try to shape their interactions with the world and each other by this moral compass that values all living things, that recognizes that all of our actions as humans have impacts on other living things, and they seek ways to act responsibly and recognize how their actions impact others. The communities that Don and Judi have collaborated with or helped create, serve similar functions with similar moral compasses. How does one act in a world with compassion and respect? Don and Judi have each other, their society of survivors of house fires, and they have their community of Friends who not only worship together, but also care for and support one another. They reconstruct the

photo albums of a wedding that was lost in a fire, they help rebuild and paint the new home, and they give each other a sense of place in the world.



Figure 20: Morris Dancers³

Case Study Findings

This small sampling of case studies highlight a rich array of diverse economic practices that each of the artists and artisans are utilizing on a regular basis to improve their quality of life. Often these practices take the form of a community building endeavor like Will's folk festivals where he worked to preserve the traditions of local folk artists for the local population, Moonlight's gallery where he hope to create a barbershop or storefront type of informal community meeting space that was centered around art, Fabiola's art making workshop with children examining race; Eric's work consulting for food cooperatives; Phyllis' community organizing work where one of her foci is raising the profile of artists as important and giving value to their work; Deborah's work helping communities discover new ways to approach problems through her mediation; Kiran's work with the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center organizing artists and artisans in ways that help each person individually, while also helping the group as a whole; Jeanne's work creating a cooperatively run consignment shop for crafters, which she handed down to the next generation of artists and artisans in the region; Karen's involvement with the buy local movement for crafts; and Don and Judi's integration of their Quaker community and the Quaker principles into their projects that extend outwards beyond the Meeting House and into the broader community through their art and innovative models like the solar installation workers' cooperative.

Each of the artists and artisans also demonstrate very vital personal practices are crucial to the continued viability of the individual artist or artisan in

the region. For Will, seeing knowledge and stories as part of a commons that only gets stronger or larger, pushes him to maintain or add voices to the process where folktales can only survive if they are a part of that process of exchange. With his novels, the importance of place reaffirms his folk artist roots and his desire to maintain the authentic lived experience of a location. Moonlight's model of resilience in the face of overwhelming financial and social obstacles is infectious. He turned to education to help refine his vision of how to explore different alternative visions for his future. It was through education that he was able to discover a community role for an art gallery that is different from the more formal gallery experiences that one might initially think of when imagining a gallery. Fabiola also has an incredible resilience in part demonstrated by her ability to utilize whatever resources she has access to in order to create a work of art or craft. For Fabiola, this resourcefulness is part of what makes a thing authentic and unique. What might seem an obstacle for people without resources to purchase materials they think they might need, in Fabiola's eyes, become an opportunity to create something that stands out as a stronger creation because it does not succumb to the limits of accessible materials. Eric utilizes pattern recognition as a kind of creative tool where he can use it to allay the fears of creativity and trust that his mind, trained in accepting patterns and the forms they construct, will develop the next pattern, and the next so that a piece of music and emerge, whether it is from a dream or a small segment of a few measures. Phyllis is careful to maintain a clear demarcation of her worth as an artist that deserves to be treated with respect and appropriate compensation. By not allowing her skills to be a free community resource she is able

to barter or pay for basic living necessities while acting as a community activist to bring awareness to the needs of artists. Deborah maintains an open and receptive outlook on life where she is receptive to opportunities when they present themselves and Deborah is able to recognize them and use the opportunity to further her own personal and professional development. Kiran had a large toolbox of skills that she could mix and match for the appropriate endeavor; in addition she had a rich resource in the support of her extended family that enabled Kiran to devote time to grow as an artist and as an organizer. Jeanne has been able to create a balance in her life with a cooperative work arrangement that allows her to have access to a studio while not having the pressures of doing a full production run of pottery. Karen has found a community of similarly minded people who utilize the resources and share whatever goods and materials they don't use and in that way they help each other live with a very low level of monetary income. Don and Judi initially seem like they are a self-sufficient pair living off the land, however, for Don and Judi their way of life is dependent on their community, whether it was recovering from a traumatic house fire, or in the spiritual centering they receive from their Quaker meetings.

When the everyday practices of artists and artisans are called economic it moves the economy from an abstract thing that individuals have no control over, to something tangible and actionable. In addition, by validating the creative economic arrangements of the artists that they are already engaged in, they can see themselves as economic actors who are contributing to a broader community economy. The micropolitical or epistemological transformations of the artist and

artisan interviewees and researchers enabled a sense of strength, assets, and possibility. It is through these very personal transformations, that individuals, groups, and communities are already regaining agency and creating alternative structures that is performing a restructuring of their community economy. The practices also speak to an incipient possibility that others can emulate and adapt for their own micro communities.

By focusing on the importance of the individual, one can begin to recognize the broader impacts upon a community that are possible. While the region clearly still needs support from state and federal funds to support arts and culture, it is counter productive to ignore the specific assets of our local artists and artisans. Their ability to generate information, data, and knowledge about how to develop as an artist, how to balance wage-earning income with creative expression, how to maintain sustainability of their creative expression, and how living in this region is a purposeful choice for the authentic sense of place, are invaluable for the possibilities that are engendered. It is through this inversion of scale, by focusing on the individual to help the community, and thereby the region (rather than the other way around), that we can create a more authentic plan for economic development, a plan that is sensitive to the local communities and the specific assets that exist there.

Nearly all of our artists talked about the influence of their travels, life journeys, tragedies, and celebrations that helped shape their sense of self as an artist. They all mentioned the importance of teachers, mentors, or peers in their exploration of medium or expression, and they all talked about the joy and sense of purpose that creative expression adds to their life. While this was primarily their

experience with becoming an artist, similar experiences shaped their political, activist, and spiritual development as well. The artists we interviewed were experienced learners and teachers. They are people who, at their core, have a clear sense of what is important in their lives and they have come to those decisions through their life experiences. There was no sense of their lives being one of privilege, rather they earned their chosen life through conscious choices, hard work, dedication, and by balancing their creative expression with other work.

The artists and artisans all struggled with how to balance the many demands on their lives with the time needed to practice their craft. The artists and artisans ranged across a wide spectrum where their creative work generated very little income, to people who have, over time, built a business model for their craft to support one or more people. All of our artists and artisans are entrepreneurs who examine their assets and explore how to apply them within the environment in a way that allows them to prioritize creative expression, while also addressing their basic needs. This balance is tenuous, and in many instances is one of the sources of a needs-based narrative that fosters a perception of reduced possibility. However, within a fairly isolated rural region that tends to lack much of the population density one might ascribe as necessary to a creative cluster or region (Florida), these artists and artisans are still finding ways to piece together a balance of endeavors that allow them to continue the creative expression that is important to them. These endeavors include wage-earning jobs like working in restaurants or retail, information technology, teaching, work in libraries, and community organizing. They also are heavily engaged in family care, for their children, partners, and

parents, and that work is reciprocal with the artist and artisans' family and friends also returning that same care and support. There is a thriving gift economy (Graham) that artists and artisans participate in where they are both givers and receivers. The gift economy helps provide resources that otherwise would be challenging to attain, whether it is the donation of a piano, studio space, or skilled labor. Moving hand in hand with the gift economy is an informal barter economy where art can be utilized for dental work, for other artists or artisans' products, for food from farmers and farm stands, and sometimes for rent. By balancing multiple tactics and intuitively participating in a diverse economy, artists and artisans, in their actions, never prioritize the capitalocentric economy, even as the capitalocentric model weighs heavily in their consciousness.

In addition to the diverse economic practices, the artists and artisans are all actively engaged in artist communities of peers whether that is locally, regionally, nationally, internationally, virtually by computer, and by learning from literature and other sources. The artists and artisans are seeking ways to better utilize materials that are available, find practices that are less damaging to the Earth and themselves, and they are seeking collaborations that help further their own growth as artists. There is a do-it-yourself ethic to the artists and artisans where they create informal, and sometimes formal, cooperatives, and find ways to utilize new technology and practices that help their endeavors. While the greater Franklin County can, at times, feel like an isolated frontier existence, it is also a place of many micro-communities where people can find likeminded people who share political, creative, or professional goals and perspectives. And, like the diverse economic

practices, the artists and artisans are engaged in diverse social practices as well, often belonging to multiple intersecting communities that help alleviate the sense of isolation.

Living in Franklin County is a choice for the artists and artisans in our study. The interviewees have lived in many locations, and while some grew up in the region and moved away before returning, they all came to Franklin County to practice their craft. There is a sense of possibility that is endemic to the region where the cost of living, the proximity of nature, and the availability of a diverse economy enable a quality of life that is difficult to attain in other regions, and in metropolitan areas in particular. In many ways, the sense of place of Franklin County is one that is built by the possibilities, and it is constrained by the narratives of need. The challenges of Franklin County, whether it is the penetration of high speed internet, audience or customer density, or the small number of galleries and performance venues, are balanced by the potential possibilities that the region retains. The small village centers, the locally owned establishments, the farmers, and the community members that coexist with the artists and artisans create an authentic sense of place where a trip to the grocery store or a walk down Main Street is accompanied by familiarity, by the greetings of friends and acquaintances, and the sense that tradition, history, heritage, and people are valued here. The friends and acquaintances are also the customers, bank tellers, shop clerks, and restaurant workers. When an economy is no longer impersonal, it gains an ability to become ethical. The choices we make as customers, loan officers, and waitresses are not anonymous; they are witnessed and experienced by the community. The people

who currently live in these villages and towns are creating the traditions and history that will become part of the region's heritage of artists and artisans. They are helping to create the sense of place that they value so much. The artists and artisans are performing an alternative economy that is focused on the wellbeing of people and performing a sense of place where authenticity is more important than growth.

While we should not ignore the real challenges that artists and artisans and the rural poor face in Western Massachusetts, when the issues are approached from a need based perspective, and a perspective that encourages scale by creating a solution that will fix as many problems as possible, the narrative that emerges is that there will always be a lack of resources, that large scale funding will always focus on more populated regions, and that the only recourse is to focus on capitalocentric solutions like tourism, bringing in industry through tax breaks, or other high cost incentives. An alternative perspective is that the region has a wealth of opportunity and possibility, and economic development should be focused on how we create structures that can support a diverse economy perspective that strengthens existing practices, and encourages the development of others.

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is only a step in a process that is nonlinear in its progress. The process of rethinking is a heterogeneous process where various aspects occur simultaneously and recursively. Helping a community reorient their epistemology into one of possibility is accomplished most easily with individuals and small groups. Furthermore, reorienting the community's epistemology utilizing weak theory to supplant the over emphasis on capitalocentric problems and solutions, can be challenging and it is easy to lose the narrative of

possibility without continual reinforcement. With the community of artists and artisans, even when the emotional narrative was one of disempowerment, the artists and artisans still pursue possibility because their existence as creative individuals relies on the diverse economic practices they are engaged in. So, for the artists and artisans, conceptually a diverse economy is easy to fathom, and when a diverse economy is recognized, the work that artists and artisans perform within the diverse economy is given value.

When a diverse economy is not recognized or diminished in importance, the value of the artists and artisans working in the diverse economy is diminished by the focus on the capitalocentric model. So, in addition to helping individuals and groups recognize the existing diverse economy, it needs to be codified by continued reinforcement of its existence and utilized as important and valid data by the people designing economic development plans. Rather than growth or capitalocentric indicators, a focus can be placed on the actual impact on people.

Part of the process of codifying and performing the diverse economy for artists and artisans is learning how to bring the language to the primary non-profit organizations in the region and garner their support. By working with the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Franklin County Community Development Center, Greenfield Community College, the local business associations, the arts and culture organizations, and the local cultural councils the artists and artisans can work with their existing allies and supporters to help reexamine how to prioritize activities in ways that can have a greater impact on the diverse economy. Each of the region's

non-profits have a different mission, so by catering proposals to each specific organization, and utilizing existing examples as evidence of potential or possibility, the regional non-profits can become even more tightly woven into the diverse economic needs of artists and artisans through their involvement in specific projects. The non-profit organizations are also very good at working with local governments and are already involved in many of the crucial committees and planning boards needed to influence local government. The artists and artisans are very motivated by specific causes and issues, and their vocal public support is a valuable asset to help the non-profits or particular political causes⁴.

Ultimately, the diverse economic model is not a model that is only applicable to artists and artisans, but is utilized in almost every sector and cohort in Franklin County. The rethinking project that starts with artists and artisans can become a model for how to perform the embrace of an existing diverse economy for the rest of the community. The transformation can better support an economy that is more in balance with the lived and desired experience of Franklin County's residents.

Engendering Agency

Through the use of a participatory action research methodology based in asset-based community development with a focus on community economies, it is possible to shift a narrative from despair and absence, to hope, possibility, and pride at what already exists and what could exist in the region. The ingredients to recognizing a different narrative are all present and, at least for the artists and artisans in this study, it was not a hard shift to make, though it was not necessarily a naturally occurring one. The strong narrative of the region is one of needs, however

shifting an epistemological stance to one of assets was not hard because the assets are a part of what attracted artists and artisans to the region, and they are what continue to keep the artists and artisans in the region.

Simultaneously, by reifying the perceived experience of many people in Franklin County, that there are multiple realities lived by people in different locations that are different than their own, it is possible to recognize that the multiple realities experienced in Franklin County are not only valid, but for many purposes, are more important than the realities that are portrayed in the national newspapers or engendered by a capitalocentric perspective. The experienced reality of the individual, the communities, and the local, is more influential on the individual well being and quality of life of the people living in the region. By recognizing that multiple realities exist simultaneously, then similarly, multiple realities can be experienced and acted upon. There is no one defining reality, rather the various realities can shift in prominence given a particular moment in time and how an individual acts within that reality can shift as well. When recognizing the assets and possibilities of Franklin County, it does not discount the existence of real needs and challenges. Those things can simultaneously co-exist.

Perhaps the most important realization of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is that there is a preexisting and thriving diverse community economy already in existence in Franklin County. Everyone we interviewed is participating in this community economy in ways that increase the diversity of possibility for the region and improve the quality of life for individuals. Even as individuals are engaged in this community economy, there is relatively little

cognizant awareness of their participation in it. Much of the participation in a non-capitalist community economy originates as a matter of course when living in the region so participation is often unconsciously enacted. A part of shifting the narrative of the region and recognizing the existence of multiple realities is the comprehension of each individual's role in performing a community economy. When one can see their role as an actor within a community economy, it is much easier to recognize the available assets and how other people's actions are also adding to the emergence of possibility. So it is in the recognition of the existence of a community economy that one can become open to the emergence of possibility, and ultimately to participate in that possibility.

By engaging a community from an activist stance and focusing on non-capitalist practices and a diverse economy, one can engender agency where there was a narrative of subjugation. Similarly, when one places value on practices that artists and artisans are engaged in, narratives of survival and success—as defined by the artists and artisans—emerged. Even the narratives of failure, were ones that inspired the research team to learn from and try again.

Through disrupting the capitalocentric needs-based development discourse, a space opens for regional artisans and artists to define themselves as economic agents and to see their work and values as supportive assets with the potential to transform and perform what was seen as marginal into a viable alternative, a resource to nurture and grow. By defining their own vision of success and prioritizing creative expression, a quality of life can be experienced by artists and artisans, even if it is simultaneously experienced with challenges and hardships.

This recognition of a poststructural existence and its multiple realities is central to helping artists and artisans recognize avenues for expanding possibility, and it is central to helping communities evolve into providing more inclusive and intersectional resources for all of its people.

Notes

¹ Chris Curtis from the *Greenfield Recorder* reports, “The slum and blight designation opens the door to federal dollars in the form of Community Development Block Grants awarded by the state, with the aim of rehabilitating abandoned slices of both villages—the old industrial sector in Turners Falls and Millers Falls’ main street.”

² Jeanne’s note reads, “Taking advantage of known human resources through collaboration. Ex. Sharing studio or booth space.”

³ Photo shared by Don Campbell.

⁴ A recent example of this is Moonlight Davis and Morning Star Chenven’s work to block the natural gas pipeline planned to cut through the region.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The Multiple Realities of Artists and Artisans

One of the core premises of the Rethinking the Creative Economy project, and a central premise to the whole diverse economies perspective, is that there are multiple realities existing simultaneously; it is an individual's positionality that brings a particular reality to the forefront of influence, impact, or action; and this particular reality is reinforced by research that prioritizes and performs an ethical approach to a community economy in a way that empowers artists and artisans to choose their roles as legitimate and valuable actors within the community ecosystem. It is this core principle that allows the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project to address the original foci: 1. Learning how a community shifts from a narrative of subjugation to a narrative of empowerment, 2. exploring what alternative realities are generated when the knowledge of artists and artisans are valued, and 3. drawing lessons from the ways artists and artisans participate differently in a diverse economic setting. Through the project's evolutionary process a transformative framework emerged to help integrate many of the different components feeding into the creative economy of the Greater Franklin County, Massachusetts.

A transformative framework is in some ways like a phoropter at an optometrist's office where a series of lenses are placed before an individual's eyes until they can read an eye chart with clarity. Each individual sitting in the optometrist's office may need a different prescription. The eye chart does not

change, however the individual is able to see with greater clarity the thing that already exists. Within the context of the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, the hope is that a transformative framework, like the phoropter, assists the artists and artisans to see the avenues of possibility that already exist with greater clarity, and then with that clarity of possibility, enable agency.



Figure 21: Creative Economy Iceberg¹

And like the individual sitting in the optometrist's office, there are some artists and artisans that do not need lenses at all to see the opportunities of possibility and

avenues of agency, and others may need it only for the things right in front of them, but can see clearly the possibilities emerging in the distance, and vice versa. These corrective lenses are what enable an individual to see both the submerged and protruding portions of the diverse economy iceberg (Figure 21). It is what enables an individual to recognize simplistic dichotomies, and to explore ways to make them more complex, accessible, and diverse.

The first set of factors at play in a transformative framework for the artists and artisans are their epistemologies. These epistemologies emerge out of the data as points of common experience, not in the sense that they all share the same experiences or always maintain a similar positionality, however nearly all of the artists and artisans spoke to the experience of seeking a sense of place that feels welcoming and conducive to a creative life cycle and the pursuit of a quality of life that enables the prioritization of creative expression.

The second set of factors in the transformative framework is the lifecycle for creative economies of the village, town, city, county, or region. Rather than a linear progression, the lifecycle is recursive, unbound by a time scale, and complex in execution. However, there are some attributes that are useful to help recognize the different stages within the lifecycle and the various opportunities and challenges that might exist. And it is helpful to recognize that a single location may experience different stages of success and challenge simultaneously.

And finally, it is the interplay of the artist and artisan with the creative economy lifecycle, and how the artist and artisans are influenced by, and can influence, the lifecycle that helps highlight points of synergy where the community

economy comes to the forefront and the creative economy recedes into the background. This more fluid vision of economy allows for the assets of the artists and artisans to be shared with their community in a way that is mutually beneficial and transformative for the artists and artisans and transformative for the community.

Shifting to a Narrative of Empowerment

Artists and artisans create their particular worldview through the accumulation of experiences that shape their epistemologies and inform their positionality or the reality that they inhabit. What is not always recognized easily, is that each individual maintains multiple positions, multiple worldviews, and is experiencing an intersectional existence that, depending on particular factors, can privilege a narrative of empowerment and possibility, just as it can privilege a narrative of subjugation and deficits.

While there are uncountable multitudes of factors influencing each individual's epistemologies, for the purposes of this study I am focusing on the transformative aspects of sense of place and quality of life for artist and artisan epistemologies. Both sense of place and quality of life are closely related and ultimately become entwined as inseparable.

Jennifer Cross in *What is Sense of Place?* sets forth six parameters to assess, biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, commodified, and dependent. Cross defines biographical as historical and familial, for example an artist or artisan's childhood hometown, where a sibling or parent resides, where one has raised their children. Spiritual is something that is more emotional and less tangible, where a

person just feels right in a particular place. Cross calls it a “sense of belonging.” For artists and artisans a spiritual sense of place might include access to inspiration whether that is proximity to nature, architecture, or street life. It may be a sensation that is disconnected from the physical place, but located more within a particular place in time for an individual. The ideological aspect of place is bound to the moral and ethical aspects of place. For artists and artisans in Franklin County that can include liberal political stances, tolerance of a diversity of races, genders, and sexual orientations, an acceptance of alternative religious and spiritual practices, and a welcoming of creative expression (Cross, 2001).

Cross’ narrative parameter focuses on how history, stories, legends, and myths all tie together a location that can allow the past to influence the present. Artists and artisans might have an informal pilgrimage to particular location like Emily Dickinson’s grave in Amherst, Archibald MacLeish’s home in Conway, or the Peace Pagoda in Leverett. They might seek out areas of historical significance for a connection to a distant past from colonial or pre-colonial times, or a more recent history where communes and intentional communities flourished and sometimes continue to flourish. The commodified aspect of sense of place is a more quantitative assessment of place where one could assess the number of students who graduate from the high schools, unemployment figures, acres of conservation land, etc. and calculate a ranking of desirability. For artists and artisans they might also try to calculate one’s proximity to artist and artisan communities, proximity to primary markets, access to raw materials, cost of housing, and access to affordable studio space, among other factors.

The last parameter Cross gives is called the dependent parameter, where choice is not easily available. This can range from maintaining a child's continuity in a school system, to caring for family members, employment availability, or affordable housing. For many artists and artisans in the region, in addition to the large amount of energy expended to establish one's self in a studio space, there is also a local support network in place that serves to maintain an artist or artisan's ability to survive in times of need. These kinds of networks are not easily or quickly replaced and can create a dependent link of place to an individual.

In addition to Cross' sense of place, artist and artisan epistemologies also emerge from the financial stressors and benefits, opportunities for activism, access to community, and the opportunities for creative expression.

For artists and artisans, often one of the first factors that is raised and needs to be overcome in order to allow other narratives and other realities to exist is the long litany of needs, many of which are fixed within a capitalocentric sphere where these factors are dependent on an influx of money or external intervention to alter circumstances. This narrative of need creates a loss of agency and self worth. When artists and artisans are not valued or appreciated, they are shifted off to the sidelines and ignored. Similarly, a shift for the better in the financial well being of an artist or artisan also has the power to, or at least is perceived to have the power to, alter a worldview into one of possibility and opportunity. For many of our artists and artisans, they assume an entrepreneurial stance as a way to generate an income from their art or craft that is rarely world changing on its own. However, by relying

on a diversity of their own initiatives they can often generate enough income to enable varying degrees of sustainability.

And so I think, addressing what you just said, being resilient, you do what you got to do to earn money. Where as in mosaics, I've had to do the same thing because with the downturn in the economy my commission work in homes really went down—took a complete nosedive. I mean, all along I've made sure to have several baskets, income streams I guess you'd call them. So, I teach, I do residencies, I apply for public art projects, I do private commission work, and then I create my own personal work to sell. So I have five different avenues where money can come in.
(Cynthia Fisher, interviewee)

Cynthia illustrates a very common pattern that was repeated by many of the artists and artisans. She creates different “baskets” that she can utilize to generate the income she and her family needs. Cynthia has already done an assessment of her assets and knows what she can offer to the community in various forms. She loves to teach and her studio is in her home so rather than working through an arts studio where she would need to pay rent, Cynthia is able to keep all the profits she can generate. Her reputation as a teacher has spread and she is able to draw in students from all over New England to come and take classes with her.

Other artists and artisans are able to utilize their skills to work for other organizations. Sandra Streeter is a photographer who also works as a photojournalist for a local newspaper. Sandra is retired and enjoys how the photography assignments augment her own work by placing her in settings that she might not usually find herself.

It does two things. It brings in a little bit of money. It puts me out in the community and presents to me lots of opportunities to take very interesting photographs that I might not bother to go do unless somebody asked me to go to some place and do something, you know? [For example,] yesterday I covered, [...] the parade in Orange and took about 400 pictures.
(Sandra Streeter, interviewee)

Working for a newspaper allows Sandra to go out into the community, and while she works to get the perfect one or two photos for the paper, she is also taking the opportunity to take another 398 photos for herself. The journalism work is the primary way that Sandra is getting paid for her photography. While she recently sold a photograph at a gallery show in Turners Falls, it is not a common occurrence for her. So, in contrast to the opportunity working for a paper gives her, Sandra is able to take hundreds of photographs, however the cost of printing for herself, or printing for galleries where her work doesn't sell, is prohibitive and limits her creative output.

I've cut back. I decided I was spending too much money on ink and paper. I'll look at the photographs and say, "Oh gee, I like that." I'll bring it out and save it, manipulate it a little bit and get it ready to print, but I won't necessarily print it anymore. Because, I really felt there was no serious avenue here for my work, and I'm just kind of rethinking. Funny that you call this [project] that because I'm rethinking my options because I can't really justify spending money or even an excessive amount of time, on something that may or may not be a worthwhile pursuit.

(Sandra Streeter, interviewee)

Sandra's income is primarily from Social Security, and while it is not quite enough to cover her needs, she is able to make it work by supplementing her income where she can, and by minimizing her expenses. While meeting her expenses can be challenging and it is rare that she is able to make a sale locally, Sandra is able to make choices. Her art is what helps give her life meaning, so she made a conscious choice to turn her living room into a studio space, and because she can make ends meet on a minimal budget she is able to do the thing that makes her life feel worthwhile.

I suppose it's just that when I'm doing creative work I'm most happy. It kind of enriches my soul, enriches my life. It gives me a purpose that seems worthwhile. I don't really choose, so much, to be an artist, I simply am. Whatever creative pursuit, whether it is sitting and learning a new song, or doing a photograph, or drawing, or writing a story, or whatever it is that I'm doing, it's reaching into that creative side of myself and producing something that feels worthwhile. It kind of excites me in a way that nothing else does.
(Sandra Streeter, interviewee)

Sandra lived in Brooklyn for most of her adult life, and though she grew up in Philadelphia, she feels New York is her hometown. In New York she felt everything was focused on making money and that money defined success. In Turners Falls, Sandra finds a respite from those kinds of pressures even as she seems to carry along some of her old habits. Mirroring what is at the core of our study, Sandra recognizes that people make their own environments and it is how she chooses to exist within that environment that gives the environment a sense of place. When asked how she would define environment she said:

Ultimately, I think we create our own environment. In a lot of ways I push myself very hard, and I live a kind of city life in the country. I have to remind myself to slow down and not take on too much.
(Sandra Streeter, interviewee)

This choice, to slow down to the speed of country life, or to push and rush like a New Yorker, is possible because of the lower cost of living expenses in the region. Sandra, can choose to slow down because the pressures to constantly make enough money to survive in New York, while still present in Western Massachusetts, is much lower and that allows Sandra, like so many of the artists and artisans in the study, to use the lower cost of living to her advantage so that she can make the kinds of choices that prioritize what gives her life meaning.

Artists and artisans also found great value in volunteering for causes that they felt passionate about. Lydia Grey, like many of the interviewees, proudly labels herself, “artist, artisan, and activist.” For many of the artists and artisans in the study their roles as activists or community volunteers help define them and their utility in the community. In addition, often it is through their volunteer roles that communities are created as Stephen East explains:

Pothole Pictures is a movie theater and it is an all-volunteer organization except the one coordinator who gets a small stipend. It began several years ago by a guy here in town who wanted to see the Memorial Hall better utilized, or even utilized at all. The upstairs was a movie theater that was not being used at all and we were worried that we would lose that resource, even the building itself. So he revived the movie theater and now there is a small group that is actively involved in it, maybe about 10 or 15 people, and we meet regularly to discuss schedules and we try to come up with ways to coordinate our activities with activities of other groups in town, or the library when they do reading projects that relate to the movies, and Mohawk music if they are doing a musically-based program and they can show a movie [that is related], and right now the Jewish film Festival in Northampton[...]. We do music before the films featuring local musicians for half an hour and I am coordinating the music right now. And that is Pothole Pictures.

(Stephen East, interviewee)

Stephen’s work with Pothole Pictures helps create a little community of volunteers that in turn, produce a cultural landmark for the Shelburne Falls community that works with other communities of volunteers and cultural intuitions. This synergistic alignment of cultural activities makes a large impact, particularly in a rural community like Shelburne Falls where it can feel quite isolated in the wintertime.

Michael Anpricti’s volunteer work helps him feel involved in the community and helps make Greenfield, Franklin County’s only city, feel like a comfortable place where people are familiar with one another, and can, for Michael, feel like a “little hometown.”

I had always lived in big cities and I discovered in Greenfield that it is very nice to leave my home and walk downtown and know people and be involved in the community. I volunteer at the Chamber of Commerce downtown, and I know quite a few of the business people in town, and I work with the fair every year, so it is just nice where I know folks and it's just like a little hometown as opposed to an anonymous big city.
(Michael Anpricti, interviewee)

In addition to the Chamber of Commerce, Michael is an officer and chaplain for local Freemason Lodges, and is an avid Civil War historian and re-enactor. In addition to his volunteer work, Michael feels that donating art to the community is a kind of duty as an artist.

I think by doing that not only is it good for the community, [it is] good for yourself to donate to the United Way or someone who is having a raffle and [get] more people see it. That's why I will put a piece of art every year in the Roundhouse at the Franklin County Fair. I am not going to sell it, but where else can an artist say it is going to be seen by probably 6000 people. And when I am at the fair people will say, I saw your piece in the roundhouse and it is really neat. So it is exposure. It is getting it out there to be seen by people. And if you donate something it is just a good thing to do. I feel that my art is a talent and if I can pay back to the community for having enjoyment of this talent that is a good thing.
(Michael Anpricti, interviewee)

While there is a side benefit where Michael can increase his visibility by donating work to help fundraise for specific causes, there is also the opportunity to share with the community some of the joy Michael receives from his work as an artist.

Bruce Kahn, a photographer, graphic artist, and musician, will often use his skills to support causes he believes in. While he doesn't often have the monetary resources to donate money, his donations are still substantive for the causes.

I am very politically aware, and I tend to spend a lot of time at least talking about that. And also as an artist, offering my services frequently for socio-political activities, be it benefit concerts... or a lot of the music that we choose to do has a lot of political/social relevance so I see myself that way as well. [...] I wasn't on that committee [to save a covered bridge], per se. I supported that with my photography in an unpaid way, just allowing them to use some

of my work in their brochures and such. And at one point they did hire me to take pictures of some sort of boating event that was happening, that was going to pass under the bridge. So I was actually hired to photograph that event in the context of that old bridge. I am frequently available to support causes that I believe in. Since I can't really support them financially, directly, I support them with what I can do, be it music, or photography, or graphic work.

(Bruce Kahn, interviewee)

Bruce's activism is often community based or based in community building through social/political causes. Because he is politically aware, he is actively contributing and doing what he can to perform the world he wants to inhabit.

Court Dorsey, who works in music and theater, and whose latest piece is a collaborative performance art work, feels that the rural nature of Franklin County actually makes activist and volunteer work more rewarding.

You can be somewhat effective in making positive change and having some conflict resolution have some effect because the problems aren't so overwhelming in a rural area that you can actually have an effect. Just like you have an impact on local government here in a way that it's very difficult to have an impact on a local government in a huge city. So in some ways, the decentralized nature can be somewhat helpful.

(Court Dorsey, interviewee)

For Court, much of his work is explicitly political. Often an activist stance in politics is a part of his creative process.

It's not always present but I think left to my own devices I very often think, "So what is the social situation we live in? Who is being harmed? What inequities are there? What's causing harm to the environment, and how can the arts address some of those issues?"

(Court Dorsey, interviewee)

For so many of the artists and artisans interviewed, a mix of volunteerism and activism help create a sense of place and a sense of community. Being a volunteer or activist is also a role where the artist and artisans' assets are recognized and valued so that the artists and artisans feel their effort are making a difference.

Talking to artists and artisans in the Greater Franklin County area about community is sometimes tricky, even as it is vital recognized need for each of the artists and artisans interviewed. In such a rural region, it is easy to feel isolated or disconnected from one's peers. The actual physical distance or time to travel may not be large, for example it is only 10 miles from Shelburne Falls to Greenfield, and one can travel from Leverett Center to Greenfield in 30 minutes, and yet the distance can feel daunting. There is something about the rural nature of the region, the winding roads, and the divide of Interstate-91, which seem to accentuate the perceived sense of distance. Evelyn Goodkind from the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center spoke about drawing in different communities to the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center, and for herself, finding a virtual community in an online listserv for local residents.

The communities drawn in, especially for the children, would be the Leverett schools, and the Shutesbury school. There have been others; people come from Hadley. And there has been interest from farther areas, but I think the commute may be much given the type of scheduling we provide. I am trying to work through that, which is a piece. I spend a lot of time talking with the parents about what is your schedule like, and what works, and what do you need that is happening here in your family life and the kids schedules. And that has been a significant piece in terms of what we are offering now [at Leverett Crafts and Arts]. That will continue to shift and grow in relation to what the community needs.

I am also part of e-cricket, which is a great e-mail community. There is the physical community of the spirit center, and I occasionally go to their weekly dinners. But the e-mail of e-cricket is a great way to stay in touch with what is going on. [...] As far as communities that I am able to be part of and reach out to, I feel that it is very limited. I have built some relationships here at Leverett Crafts and Arts with other artists and sometimes we'll not see each other for a long time, but there is still that connection, which is neat. [...] And then there is the raw foods community, which is really important to me. [...] So that is a big one. And because I am a full-time mom, when I am not doing what I am doing here, I have to pick and choose what time I am able to spend in these kinds of communities. The raw food has gotten a priority. I am part

of a women's spiritual group, which meets once a month and that is nice and there are some artists in there too.
(Evelynn Goodkind, interviewee)

It is interesting that Evelynn brought up the virtual community on the internet. For many of the residents in Shutesbury and Leverett, e-cricket is a way to maintain local knowledge of what is happening around town, where social gatherings are meeting, and what issues are rising to the top of people's agenda. In many ways, for people who are active on e-cricket, it allows a resident to become more intimately involved in community activities than ever was possible using physical bulletin boards at the local libraries, town halls, post offices, and the Leverett Village Coop grocery store. Evelynn also spoke to how among communities of artists there are connections that are retained, even when they have been apart without communication for long periods of time.

Evelynn also has 5 year-old twins, so a large part of her immediate community is her family, and that has taken up much of her time so that meeting with people outside of the home often has to be intentional and meaningful. However, even with that caveat, she seems to be engaged in a surprising number of communities and venues.

Rochleigh Wholfe talked about attending a lecture about the resonance a community can leave on a place thorough concrete physical manifestations, like the architecture of an area in Texas that reveals the African American culture that existed in the past. She utilizes community in a performative activist orientation.

It is our environment, and [...] we [can] create, [...] not only on a canvas—in a limited space of 3, 6, 4, 7, 10 feet or whatever, but that our canvas is our community, and working together [with that community] collectively, collaboratively and creating that which heals us and brings us together and

allows us to celebrate life and the beauty of who we are as people and the similarities and the likenesses that we have instead of the differences, and honoring that, you know, on a regular basis.
(Rochleigh Wholfe, researcher)

For Rochleigh, community building is also a part of the creative process and a part of her work as an artist. Rochleigh sees the environment as one of possibility, where the community that fills that environment can be ethically guided in a way that performs a healing celebratory community.



Figure 22: Moonlight, Rochleigh, and Judi

Sandra Streeter talked about her personal history with the environment and what she has witnessed as change over time. While she has a deep nostalgia for how the region used to be, she has also channeled that nostalgia into her present deep concern for the environment.

I like being out in the country where I can see the natural environment. When I was born in 1942, in Northfield. My grandfather owned a lot of the farmland along the Connecticut River, and we had pastureland that went right down to the river. I used to ride my pony down in the pastures and I remember the incredible number of birds, in particular bluebirds. Even eagles would be soaring over the river. That always gave me a sense of wellbeing even though things weren't also so peaceful in the family. And over the years, seeing what has happened to the river, and to much of the landscape.... Because Route 91 went through our town, and Vermont Yankee built a nuclear plant right on the river, and just the everyday things that just keeps wearing away at our environment. Bringing the road through brought a lot of gas fumes, and I think lead into our valley until the gas was made lead-free. I personally feel there's been a huge increase in illness and disease for the trees and plant life as well as the human life.
(Sandra Streeter, interviewee)

Sandra talked about how a challenging home life when she was growing up pushed her to turn inward for solace and peace, and that was the inception of her development as an artist. But Sandra also has a keen sense of the external environment, and working against the monopolies controlling media outlets, she tries to tell the stories that counter war, nuclear power, and environmental destruction. At the same time, she has welcomed her daughters' family back into the homestead and another generation of Sandra's family is able to experience the same kind of lifelong connection to a place that she experienced. It is from that lifelong connection to place that a concern for the environment arises, and from that, the powerful drive to actively protect that environment.

Cris Carl is a housing placement specialist for a family homeless shelter, poet, and freelance writer who publishes articles mainly on the internet. She mostly writes about green ecological issues, however her most popular article stemmed from an interview with a local therapist about household clutter. The issue

connected with a large number of people and within days her article spawned 118 comments.

So that is the thing about writing, it is creating a larger community through words and it affects people just like any other kind of art. You see something and you feel something. I have never been a visual artist, I have worked with words and I spent years and years and years writing poetry that can be and is incredibly evocative, but there is no money in it.
(Cris Carl, interviewee)

It is interesting that while Cris's creative outlet of poetry is the thing that is designed to affect people as art, her article writing also generates responses as visceral as the poetry. For Cris, the ability for language to transcend specific formats is an aspect of her Algonquin heritage.

For example, here is the thing, [...] if you want to talk about a cultural thing the problem with that is not a problem with me and to people who study native people, we primarily have oral history. [But] most scientists do not trust oral history despite the fact that that was really embedded in our culture in such a way that that is your life path. If you are the orator for your tribe, it is not like you [can] make a mistake or you misremember things. That is what you spend your whole life doing. So it is not like us telling a story, it is really very different, and you would go from tribe to tribe telling the stories and spreading news.
(Cris Carl, interviewee)

Within Cris' Native American culture, oral histories are designated oratory functions that are valued and accepted as knowledge. It is the traditional way her tribe's culture was preserved and passed on, and it also served the performative function of assigning authority to the tribe's history and their journey to the present. Cris also talked about the early pictograms that the tribe left and the pictograms served a similar function to document the various Algonquin tribes' individual realities. For Cris, rethinking how history is recorded and whose history is given privilege, is "embedded" in her culture.

During the day, working at the family shelter, Cris is able to be a voice for many of the people who have been disenfranchised from opportunity and possibility. Cris is passionate about her work at the shelter, and then she is also able to set aside time on weekends to write, and sometimes when work is slow at the shelter she will do some writing there too.

It is humiliating to live in a homeless shelter and I don't care what your age or race is, or socioeconomic level is. I have people with master's degrees and I had a person who had a \$400,000 house in a private community around here, a wealthy community, who got fired and couldn't pay the taxes and lost the house. And this is someone who used to work for hospice. Everyone has this image of homeless people, bums on the street kind of thing, and it is really not like that. [...] I will write more on the weekends and occasionally things are very slow at work and I can do a little bit there because some of the things that I do are very brief, just 500 words or so, and it is just about a [specific] topic. But for the more in-depth articles that I do, I take more time with them and I might work in the evening and interview people or go out and see them. [...] I also take photographs and I have done a lot with photography over the years.
(Cris Carl, interviewee)

In both her work at the shelter and her work as a freelance writer, Cris' is involved with giving voice to and legitimizing the untold or neglected stories. For Cris, the environment is conducive to her needs as a writer and enables the kind of possibility she needs to continue writing.

This is a community that is very nourishing to its artists. It is very respectful to its artists, that is something that I have witnessed since I [arrived] here 20 years [ago]. And I enjoy the environment. The thing about this area, it is a funny mixture, of old farmers, old Yankee farmers, and old hippies. Virtually none of my friends are from here except for maybe one or two. Everybody [else] is a transplant and they have created a different kind of environment from what was here even just 25 years ago.
(Cris Carl, interviewee)

Cris came to Greenfield, Massachusetts from Philadelphia and Pittsfield, but once she visited Greenfield she knew that was where she wanted to live. The

environment seemed welcoming and full of possibility, but most of all, the way the community treats its artists with respect made her feel welcome in Greenfield. In exchange, Cris shares her passion of writing with the community, and works to promote her ethical stance by placing families into housing from the shelter.

I love how writing makes me feel. I was just saying to my wife the other day, when I sit down it is the one time that I am so crystal-clear focused. Time just goes and I am so involved. It is the most focusing thing in the world, like meditation. It just makes me feel fantastic. I am not somebody that sits still very easily, but it is the one thing that absolutely stills me. It feels like it comes from my whole being, as corny as that might sound. [...] I bring something different to journalistic writing or reporting or that type of thing. There is a way to be creative with that and affect people and help them to learn something, and helping someone to learn something is an amazing thing.
(Cris Carl, interviewee)

Cris is a wonderful example of how an artist contributes her skills to the community. Like each of the other artists and artisans, Cris' epistemology informs how she interacts with her community. The same skills that enable her to write 500 word articles also enable her to learn about a family's history and work to place them in an apartment so they can move out of a hotel or shelter.

Each of these artists is unique and emerges from very different backgrounds and histories, however they are all driven to help change their communities for the better. They are all engaged in performing alternative possible realities through activism, teaching, support for local projects, donations to charitable causes, volunteer work, social work, community building, and writing. These alternate realities enable the artist or artisan to have a relationship with the environment and generate a sense of place where they are valued and have agency. The artists and artisans' valuable assets are making a tremendous impact on the communities in

and around Franklin County, Massachusetts, and yet they are largely uncounted when one examines tax receipts, household income, or numbers of work sold. The epistemologies of these artists and artisans create a fertile awareness of the world and community economy around them, and perhaps, due to professions that are creative in nature, there is also a very strong inclination to actively work to strengthen their communities. Cris Carl summed it up beautifully in her interview when she talked about all the rejuvenation and change she has seen in the local communities, “It has been an amazing thing to see just in the last five years. I can't believe what I have seen and it is the artists that are making it happen.” The artists and artisans’ relationship with place enables a standpoint of agency.

The Life Cycle of a Creative Economy

Like the artists and artisans, communities, villages, towns, cities, and counties also exist in multiple realities simultaneously. Building off of Stuart Rosenfeld’s concept of creative economy’s life cycle model, I’ve imagined it as a motion from 1. Prosperity, to 2. Self-Preservation, to 3. Crisis, to 4. Opportunity².

A prosperous community is one that feels vibrant and rich with experiences and possibility. It is a diverse community that contains a wide range of ages, but is particularly focused on young adult community members, the new innovations, and the creative inspirations that influence others. There is a relatively rapid turn over of entrepreneurial experiments, successes, and failures.

However, after a period, community members can become more interested in preserving what they have, rather than continuing to change, and the excitement

and risk-taking associated with prosperity begins to slide toward self-preservation. Rather than maintaining diversity, the concern is more about homogeneity, ensuring the things that people have come to value stay the same. There are the official and unofficial gated communities that ensure good public schools (or private school alternatives) for a specific demographic of children. There are business districts that enforce a particular uniformity to downtowns and commercial zones. Increasingly tax revenues are prioritized to pay for the amenities that the community has come to value and demand, whether that is a greater police presence, road maintenance, better schools, etc. All of the things people value and fear losing becomes a subject for enclosure. The cost of living rises to meet the desires of increasingly affluent citizens and eventually the very kinds of people who enabled the community to become prosperous are now priced out of the region and many of the earlier innovative or unique storefronts are replaced with more profitable businesses that can meet the higher rent costs. A community in this stage is often driven by people in their mid-life to retirement ages where there are initially children to protect; family friendly values; and a greater concern with material items, whether that is restaurant quality or designer fashions. Increasingly of concern as the largely homogeneous population moves towards retirement are the high taxes that used to fund schools and other amenities. The concern for safety, convenience, and familiarity are the main drivers of the community. Anything that violates the established norm is seen as an intrusion. The bars to accessibility in the community for new residents are purposely or unintentionally set very high.

As the movement towards self-preservation ages, what once ensured the continuation of an idealized vision of community ensures its movement into crisis. The crisis period is what happens when self-preservation has gone awry, and even when there is little to preserve, the driving concern is to protect what little remains of what was once prosperous. The loss of a sense of possibility for the creative core, as well as an aging of the community infrastructure, creates a vacuum that manifests in empty storefronts and vacant houses, underfunded public school systems, and often drug and alcohol issues due to the lack of opportunity for its residents. Often times, the crisis period is marked by little civic engagement from an older population or a population focused more on their own needs. There is also little ability for the community infrastructure to be maintained and key infrastructure elements fall into disrepair.

Sometimes, the crisis stage is able to give birth to a new sense of possibility, that when a varied combination of conditions are just right; where the storefront availability is high; the cost of housing is low; resistance to change or innovation is weak or has dissipated; and there is a group of people to create a sense of community, whether it is made up of just a small handful of people, or a larger group, there is a potential to create the conditions for the opportunity stage to occur where innovations inspire other innovations, and possibility is not merely perceived, it is witnessed at multiple levels in the community, on main street, in community parks, and particularly for artists and artisans, in the studios and performance spaces. In an opportunity stage an older population works with a younger population in a symbiotic coordination.

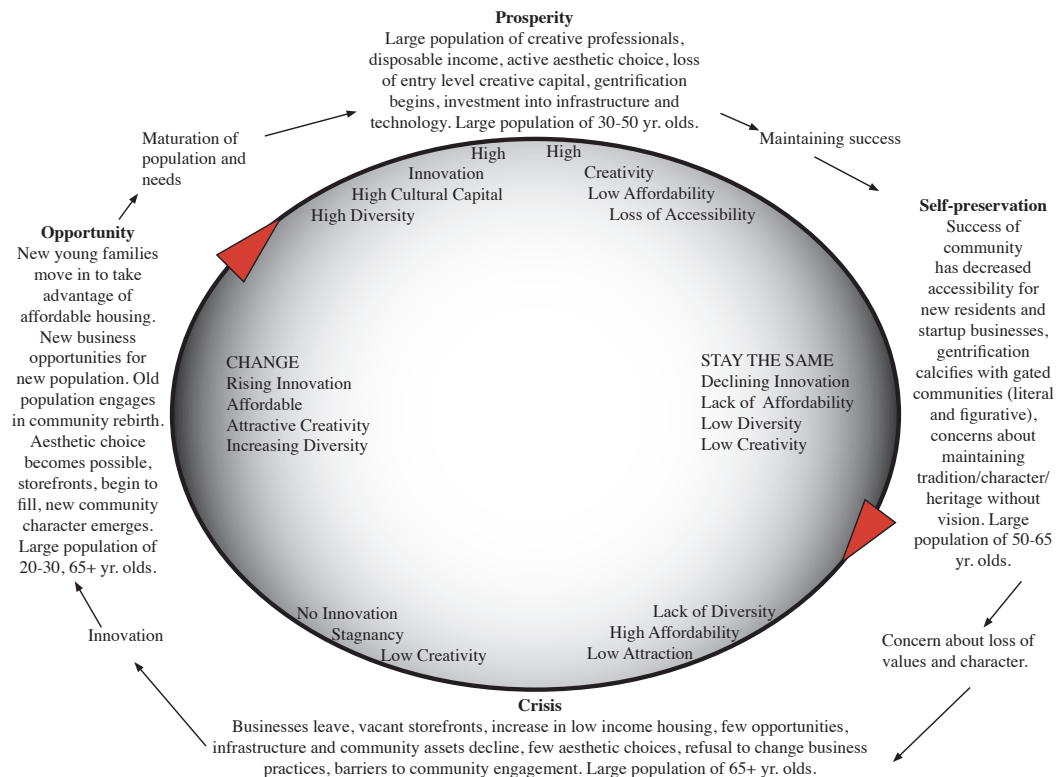


Figure 23: Life Cycle of a Creative Economy

The older population has the experience, knowledge, and often the physical assets of buildings or loans, and the younger population brings new ideas, a sense of vitality, and a vision filled with possibility.

In a simplified world, every community would cycle through these stages at some predictable span of time, like the arc of human development, however, that is clearly not the case. There are prolonged periods of self-preservation and crisis, just as there are long and short examples of opportunity and stages of prosperity.

Moving at a span of time that feels more geologic than human based, the desire of traditional community developers is to be able to control this developmental cycle, and that if enough of the right conditions could be manipulated, then perhaps a

crisis stage could be moved to an opportunity stage, and then eventually move to a prosperous stage... all within a period of grant fundable initiatives. Incredibly, at least in grant report narratives, this is sometimes apparently achieved.

R.W. Butler created a similar lifecycle model applied to the development of tourism. In Butler's model Exploration develops into Involvement, to Development, to Consolidation, Stagnation, Decline, and then potentially Rejuvenation. Similar to my model of the creative economy, there is a concerning cyclical implication, that one stage follows the next. That the early stage of exploration, where people are exploring a landscape largely independently and are drawn by "natural and cultural-historical features," will evolve into an organized tourism industry with a season, marketing and infrastructure, and then development will occur where local facilities are replaced by larger external companies. And then when visitors from tourism outnumber the local residents and the local economy is entirely focused on serving visitors rather than the residents, aspects of the local infrastructure begin to decay. The ensuing stagnation signals the loss of the uniqueness that drew tourists to the region in the first place, and then a decline as the entire tourism industry collapses and is converted to other uses. In rare instances it may be possible to recapture the uniqueness that was lost and rejuvenate the tourism energy, however Butler warns it is rare for an area to be able to retain its unique properties and withstand the forces of change indefinitely (Sears, 1999).

If one recognizes the life cycle pattern, there may be opportunities to create interventions that could forestall what can seem like an inevitable path towards entropy. For example, these opportunities for intervention could take the form of

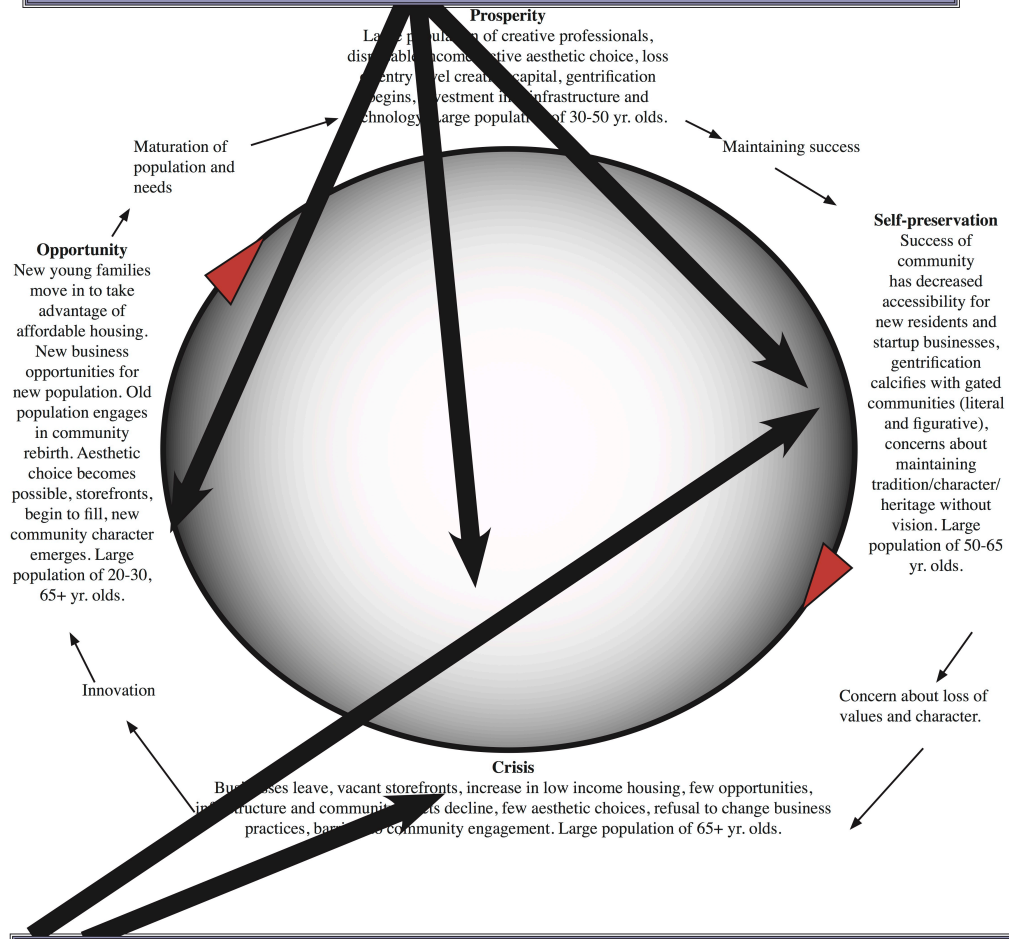
creating arts and culture land trusts where the kinds of diversity and creativity that help propel a stage of opportunity can be retained through prosperous stages by retaining affordable studio or live-work space and venues where a creative community can gather and feel a sense of belonging, a sense of place, even as change is occurring. Once a community finds itself in a cycle of self-preservation or crisis, if there is enough self awareness, a community can endeavor to highlight and strengthen the neglected creative assets and reinvigorate a sense of possibility and creativity that may otherwise be unrecognized or neglected.

Both of these examples of intervention depend on the collaboration of community members with community leaders and development planners to look beyond the immediate returns of a capitalocentric focus and instead work to strengthen and retain the aspects of place that make a location unique. By working from an asset-based perspective a community can move from a passive victim of change to becoming an active participant in guiding how change impacts a city, town, or village. If a capitalocentric vision of a successful economy can be decoupled from sense of place and quality of life, then a focus on a community economy can occur where a sense of possibility can emerge from endogenous assets and a community can actively choose to fortify a sense of place and bolster the quality of life.

Intervention: Land Trusts

It may be possible to interrupt the cyclical nature through the institutionalization of arts and business incubators, the creation of arts and culture land trusts in communities, and the fostering community support for local arts and culture similar to the models employed by local organic farmers.

By retaining fresh creative capital (energy, ideas, diversity), communities can extend the benefits of renewal and rebirth.



Intervention: Asset Mapping

By promoting the opportunities of a region and creating a greater awareness of existing creative capital, burgeoning diversity, and rising innovation, motion out of a Self-preservation or Crisis stage could be accelerated.

The creative economy is as much about recognizing existing strengths as it is about developing new ones.

Figure 24: Intervention in the Creative Economy Life Cycle

In the late 1990's I was working as a luthier and rented a workshop in Northampton, Massachusetts from a cabinetmaker and long time resident of the city. At the time, Northampton was enjoying a great vibrant music scene with a

vibrant downtown. Even on the fringes of the city where my workshop was, there was a sense of possibility. In just that one building there was at one point five different guitar builders' workshops and a used record store. This was in a somewhat out of the way, nondescript building, along side the cabinetry shop and a showroom for landscaping equipment. Sometimes, when I went to pay rent, or needed to borrow a piece of equipment, I would hang around and talk with the cabinetmaker as he told me stories about growing up in the area. It was during one of these times that he told me about Northampton in the 1970s.

Apparently, Northampton at the time was a desolate, post-manufacturing city with empty storefronts, empty buildings, and a fearful sense of despair. It surprised me that Northampton had not always been a vibrant and hip city filled with a great variety of restaurants, thrift stores, and boutiques. For the cabinetmaker, the Northampton I had known since the early 1990s still felt like a relatively new occurrence. And yet, even then, friends of mine who flocked to Northampton during graduate school were finding themselves priced out of the city, or relegated to basement apartments. I loved the restaurants, but could only afford to dine out on special occasions. Nevertheless, then, as now, Northampton was seen as a thriving arts community, and example of how art and culture could turn a city's fortunes around. For newer residents, it seems almost unfathomable that an alternate Northampton could have existed in the relatively recent past. There is a sense of permanence that Northampton will always be the cultural epicenter of the Pioneer Valley.

Interplay of Artists and Artisans and The Creative Economy Life Cycle

Communities exist in multiple realities just as the artists and artisans do. If the artists and artisans are experiencing multiple realities, then, of course, so too are their communities. And like their communities, the artists and artisans are moving through their own developmental stages where they may be experiencing prosperity where there is a strong well defined peer group of artists and artisans, the general community recognizes the individual's value and contributions to the community, and there is a strong sense of belonging. This can shift to a more insular self-protective stage where the priority is placed on ensuring one's place within the community, or perhaps more accurately, preserving one's own sense of place within a community. And then, there is crisis, the loss of agency, the loss of opportunity, loss of business, personal tragedies, prison, all interruptions of the memories of what were held as valuable.

Sometimes, it is these tragedies that enable a rebuilding, a re-envisioning of one's life into something new, whether that is a returning home, a letting go of something that was a primary concern and enabling something else to take its place, or some other opportunity that might not have seemed available in other situations. And while tragedies do not always inspire the possibility of something new, sometimes they are the very opportunity for that rebirth that matures into a prosperous stage where individuals have coalesced into communities that move in concentric circles outwards from individual, to family, to peers, to communities, to audiences, etc.

Again, as in mainstream community development, the desire is for this cycle to be something that can be manipulated consciously or subconsciously by the individual or by some outside agency. The desire is for a prosperous stage to be attained and maintained like a permanent stage of enlightenment.

Countering that image, I argue that all places and communities are in constant change and have the potential to perform all their stages of development simultaneously. Concurrently, all the artists and artisans are also experiencing their own multiple developmental stages and it is the alignment of a particular community's reality at a particular place, in a particular point in time, with an individual artist or artisan's developmental perspective in that moment that creates a sense of place and a perceived quality of life. Both the community reality and the individual reality are in turn influenced by a standpoint that builds an epistemology that is surprisingly malleable. For many of the artists and artisans in the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project, starting from an asset-based perspective, starting with successes, strengths, and possibilities, was enough to, at least for a short period, inspire a change in the experienced reality for the individual. It is in this space where rich possibility exists, where artists and artisans are already performing the reality the artists and artisans wish to inhabit, but their work is not always recognized as valuable. The space is a liminal opening between crisis and opportunity. This is the space in which volunteerism, activism, and civic engagement happen. An individual can move from Winchendon, to Orange, to Greenfield, to Shelburne Falls, to Holyoke and experience different forms of need in

each place, but an individual can also find ways to engage and contribute to the community in each of those places.

The Individual's Influence On the Sense of Place

It is very complicated and challenging to try to manipulate a city's capitalocentric economy to shift from crisis to opportunity, and perhaps even harder to try to manipulate a capitalocentric economy from opportunity to prosperity. However, it is much easier to work with individual artists and artisans and their lifetimes' worth of experiences to help value alternate epistemologies. If one can learn how to make an ethical choice, a choice that prioritizes community and assets over other more capitalocentric worldviews, then it can inspire a more fluid sense of agency, an agency that is produced internally instead of externally. Deconstructing an epistemology can allow one's personal history to be reexamined and given a narrative of agency. It is this internal agency that then performs the individual's community economy and causes it to exist in that point in time, in that place, from that individual's perspective. As more people are able to engage in the ethical choice to perform the world they would like inhabit, then these common experiences of agency can begin to prioritize values that further perform a community economy reality within the broader artist and artisan communities. By focusing on creating change for the small scale of the individual artist or artisan, then the individual artists and artisans can perform on the larger scale of community or a creative community economy.

There is a relationship between the environment and the individual where, just as the environment influences the individual, so too does the individual influence the environment. It is possible to thrive in a crisis environment just as it is possible to struggle in a prosperous environment. It is the relationship between an individual and the environment that produces a sense of place and recognition of the unique aspects of a location. In Franklin County, Massachusetts there are large structural deficits, and while the approach of the project is asset-based, the deficits artists and artisans are facing are also real and it can be very challenging to affect real change for some of those deficits. However, where the capitalocentric economy places an emphasis on those deficits, choosing to adopt an asset-based approach that situates primarily in the community economy, enables a reconfiguring of standpoint and can generate a sense of possibility where the possibility perhaps always existed, but was not recognized. And once possibility is recognized, agency can be established so that artists and artisans can become actors within that possibility rather than victims.

Considerations

In the future there is an opportunity to ascertain longer-term effects of a rethinking of the economy within the artist and artisan community. The artists and artisans are consciously and unconsciously immersed in a community economy, therefore it was relatively easy for the researchers and interviewees to understand the concept and they were very receptive to the idea. Many of the artists and artisans are already active in civic engagement, however they are not always

recognized for their efforts, and the artists and artisans themselves don't always recognize the importance of their community-focused work until it is named as an asset in the diverse economy framework.

There is a concern that the shift in perspective, the rethinking, might be temporary, that the strong theory of capitalism would weigh down aspirations until they were subsumed, or as J.K. Gibson-Graham state, penetrated by the capitalocentric dominance (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Can an empowered epistemology be retained beyond the period of the research project? Can the narrative of empowerment engender a broader community change? And perhaps because artists and artisans already live in a very precarious balance between the capitalocentric and community economies, without continued validation and support it could be very easy to slip back into narrative of deficits.

The Rethinking the Creative Economy Project struggled to maintain post-research projects. Ideally the artist and artisan researchers and perhaps the co-coordinators would have been able to continue to put findings into actionable steps and help manage those outcomes. There is a clear understanding that while change is constant, change can also be a gradual process over many years. The participatory action research was one step along a continuum of change. While there was the inability to indefinitely maintain a longer-term relationship within the context of the project for the co-coordinators, some of the researchers and interviewees pursued or continue to pursue endeavors that diversified the economy with alternative possibilities.

The project itself was funded with a very narrow window of 12 months from the purchasing of equipment to the implementation of the project. However, the artists and artisans continued working together with the co-coordinators to produce an art show called Phase 1: Creating Multiple Realities. The Phase 1 indicated the idea that there were other phases to come. The show included crafts, visual art, performances, and readings. The gallery opening was really a celebration with all the researchers and it also was a kind of closing of the project. As with any community there was a fluid movement as several researchers subsequently moved to different parts of the country, Kiran passed away, Moonlight's gallery closed, and another researcher opened a cooperative storefront. While there were a few more gatherings of parts of the research team to participate in a Creative Economy Summit presentation, and later to pull together a Phase 2 art show in the form of an online gallery, the excitement and energy generated by the broad based participation seemed to slip back into a quieter, and perhaps more manageable state.

The Creative Community Economy

Franklin County is a truly a dynamic region where the multiple realities are constantly at play and interacting with each other. It is perhaps this rich interaction that helps define a sense of place that is conducive to a diverse economy where artists and artisans can secure many of their basic needs while also prioritizing the creative expression in the crafts and art they produce. The artists and artisans are already participating in a vibrant community economy; in this case the endeavor

may not always be about creating avenues for the traditional creative economy to flourish. Instead, the greater endeavor might be rethinking how to strengthen the economy that is generated in the non-capitalist sphere (Table 2).

Table 2: The Creative Economy in J.K. Gibson-Graham's Diverse Economy Framework

Enterprise	Labor	Property	Transactions	Finance
Capitalist Recording Studios Galleries Stores Craft schools	Wage Hourly Salaried Unionized Non-unionized Stipends Project specific	Private Individually or collectively owned by small groups: tools, materials, instruments, etc.	Market Wholesale Curated markets/fairs	Mainstream Market Private banks Investment and retirement firms Insurance firms Financial services
Alternative Capitalist Artisan foods and beverages	Alternative Paid Self employed Cooperative Reciprocal labor In-kind	Alternative Private State owned Community college owned Town public works equipment Non-profit owned and shared meeting space and venues Hospital and school venues Restaurant walls, bar stages	Alternative Market Direct sales Barter Materials and goods exchanges Community supported music series Grant supported performance or production Web markets (Etsy)	Alternative Market Cooperative banks Community based financial services Micro-finance Crowd sourced funding to provide a product Government sponsored lending
Non-Capitalist Gallery owners Studios Cooperative workspaces stores and galleries Recording studios Independent distribution of music Individual work for hire Grant work	Unpaid Volunteer Community work Housework Self provisioning	Open Access Skills Knowledge Personal histories Experience Some web based materials and content	Non-Market Sharing Gifting Household gardens Found objects Recycling materials Gleaning	Non-Market Crowd sourced funding in support of an idea or concept Family or peer lending Donations

When a community can contribute to the rethinking of economy in a way that values the individual artist or artisan, then the artists and artisans and the non-artists and artisans can co-create a diverse economy. If we return to Gibson-

Graham's Diverse Economy Framework (Table 1), we can adjust it to incorporate the kinds of activities artists and artisans are engaged in, and like the iceberg diagram, the artists and artisans are fully embedded within a diverse economy where they are active and productive actors.

By continually reinforcing the community economy's validity, and thereby enabling a greater sense of possibility and agency, artists and artisans can enact change. They can become actors within the local economy. Because of the low population density of Franklin County, many of the examples of community economy practices may be small, but small may be just right for this place, at this particular time, for these particular actors. And, small actions within a small community can have correspondingly large effects. The value of artists and artisans in a community is not necessarily in the art, craft, and performances they create and sell, rather the larger impact lies in the epistemologies of the artists and artisans and how that drives a sense of possibility, and from that possibility emerges active citizenship. Focusing development on the endogenous community strengthens a sense of place. It is the people's relationships with place that create key elements of their self-identity and that in turn impact the perceived and performed quality of life.

Every community is experiencing change and is in the process of evolving. The models and frameworks help enable a malleable structure to assist in creating knowledge and recognizing the interconnected relationships of artists and artisans to place. The models and how the models are read will change depending on the ethical stances of the researchers and what the researchers choose to focus on. By

focusing on the assets of a community through a diverse economy lens that privileges the non-capitalist practices, the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project is performing a landscape of possibility. When artists and artisans are gifted with a sense of possibility, then their contributions to a community extend far beyond aesthetic considerations or the studios and galleries. The artists and artisans can contribute to a sense of place that impacts the relationships that all people, including non-artists and artisans, have with their cities, towns, villages, and communities. The assets of artists and artisans are focused on civic engagement and strengthening the communities they live and work in. It is the qualities of these relationships of artist and artisan to place that generate an individual's personal histories and then become integrated into the individual's sense of self. When these relationships and personal histories are identified as unique and of value, then the perceived quality of life is raised, which in turn, enables the performative effect of increasing the quality of life. It is there that I return to Julie Graham's definition of an economy as a system that improves the quality of life for people.

The generative impact of a vibrant creative economy does not stem from amenities, tourism, or better marketing. A vibrant creative economy is the product of a community that values and utilizes the assets of artists and artisans so that they are integral to the sense of place. By strengthening and validating the community economic practices of artists and artisans, the focus of development can be redirected from the large scale of altering regional metrics, where despite the affluence of data, the resolution is very low, to the small scale of the individual

artists and artisans and how the assets of individuals can collectively shape a region's sense of place and quality of life.

Notes

¹ The Creative Economy Iceberg is an adaptation of the Diverse Economy Iceberg (see Figure 3). The iceberg image is used with a creative commons license (Kils & Bodo, 2005).

² Rosenfeld's model assigned general age ranges for different stages of development, but he was careful to say these stages do not correlate chronologically with an individual's life, but are more an aggregate of a community's population. In addition, while the characteristics are not necessarily characteristics of individuals, they are characteristics of people experiencing different stages of life and collectively that can influence a village, town, or city.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GRANT APPLICATION

**Fostering Art and Culture in the Greater Franklin County
Participatory Action Research Final Proposal
2010 University of Massachusetts President's
Creative Economy Initiatives Fund**

Principal Investigator: Prof. Richard Wilkie, Geosciences, rwilkie@geo.umass.edu

Project Co-coordinator: Abby Templer, Sociology, atempler@soc.umass.edu

Project Co-coordinator: Leo Hwang-Carlos, Geosciences, lhwang@geo.umass.edu

Project Overview

Franklin County is a culturally rich region where artists and artisans contribute to a diverse range of economic activity that is difficult to measure using the standard economic metrics and is challenging to address through a dependence on exogenous development efforts. The aim of this project is to highlight and support the diverse economic activity of the artists and artisans in the region. Making visible the rich economic activities already in practice can help the region foster a positive economic identity—shifting away from the portrayals of a region in need—and provide an opportunity to direct funding towards community centered, or endogenous economic practices. Through the use of participatory action research (PAR) with a group of artists and cultural ambassadors, we will create a community partnership of people who: are taught how to recognize various forms of economic activity, are given tools and resources to record and document these activities, and are provided with consultation to identify practices and endeavors that can strengthen those activities. With the Fostering Art and Culture Project (FACP) we will create a venue through which this data can be shared and disseminated across Franklin County and beyond.

The FACP is a collaborative project with Greenfield Community College, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, RiverCulture, the Shelburne Falls Area Business Association, and local artists. The FACP was originally funded as part of Congressman Olver's Northern Tier Initiative, which identified the creative economy as a foci for the region. The FACP has received funding to develop a countywide marketing plan, five pilot project sites, a website portal, and a small PAR cohort. Collaboration with the University of Massachusetts will enable further research that will advance a community based creative economy.

Methods

Working collaboratively with the FACP, and utilizing the models employed by J.K. Gibson-Graham in their Community Economies projects, the project co-

coordinators, **Abby Templer** (University of Massachusetts, Sociology), and **Leo Hwang-Carlos** (University of Massachusetts, Geosciences; Greenfield Community College, Associate Dean of Humanities) will draw from and contribute to the construction of dialogue around the creation and recognition of diverse economic practices in the creative economy. We currently aim to recruit and train 10 artist and artisan researchers live and create in the greater Franklin County community. By funding this project, the University of Massachusetts will enable the expansion of the pool of artist and artisan researchers from 10 to 20, and the pool of data collected from 50 to 100 artist and artisan interviews. Support from the university would double our contact in, and understanding of, Franklin County's creative economy.

We will seek to draw a demographically diverse representation from various genres of artists and craftspeople (writers, painters, musicians, wood workers, potters, sculptors, photographers, DIY, etc.), and various sectors of the creative economy (technology, design, etc.). We will also seek participation from local governments and the Franklin County Council of Governments so that we can have the opportunity to contribute to creating and changing regional development policy in ways that support the creative economy of Franklin County.

The project co-coordinators will provide training in: looking for diverse economic practices, cultivating reflexivity and understanding positionality, interviewing techniques, and training on comfortably using digital recorders. Each researcher will then be responsible for completing a minimum of five interviews over eight weeks that explore their peer artists and artisans and the diverse kinds of economic activity in which they are engaged. We will meet with the researchers after the second set of interviews for a preliminary debriefing and trouble-shooting session, and will provide an introduction to collaborative analysis. We will meet again at the end of the project to share our findings and participate in a collaborative analysis and select strong practices that the group would like to promote or strengthen in the region.

We will host a community event to share the findings of the project. Since the researchers are artists themselves, we will invite them to create a work in their medium representing the process or their findings, which they will then share with the public along with their analysis. We will also work with groups to help them find resources or develop action plans around the projects they would like to strengthen or foster in the region.

Project Goals

The goals of the participatory action research (PAR) are (1) to create a pool of indigenous knowledge about the broad range of economic activities that artists and artisans participate in, and how these activities impact the community; (2) create avenues to share this knowledge with the region to increase an understanding of how artists and artisans impact our communities; (3) work with artists and artisans to select activities that foster the growth and adaptation of existing diverse

economic practices; and (4) assist the community in recognizing available resources and possible funding sources to support and strengthen their creative economy.

In addition, the project coordinators will publish findings in print and electronic formats, present at local and national conferences, actively seek forums that will assist Franklin County's endeavors to obtain support and funding for the creative economy, and through a consulting role, help foster the development or expansion of promising practices uncovered through the PAR component of the project. The coordinators also hope to build an interdisciplinary (sociology and geography) curriculum designed to utilize PAR for community economies where we will teach students at the University of Massachusetts and Greenfield Community College how to utilize the tools of PAR to research their own communities and identify opportunities for development.

Success Measures

- Recruitment of 20 researchers
- Collection of 60 interviews, minimum.
- Dissemination of findings through print and web formats.
- Identification and creation of action plans for community findings

Key Managerial and Administrative Challenges

Project co-coordinators, Abby Templer and Leo Hwang-Carlos will be responsible for coordinating and executing the project and utilizing the expertise of the principle investigator, Prof. Richard Wilkie for advisement and consultation.

One of the key challenges of the project will be managing the data collection of 20 researchers; insuring data is regularly deposited in a centralized location (for example, a UDrive account), coordinating with the transcriptionist, and maintaining a running analysis of the data. Project co-coordinators will also maintain links to the community, though working with the team of researchers and troubleshooting relationships between researchers and potential interviewees.

Due to the project time frame, the co-coordinators will need to exercise vigilance in maintaining momentum with the research cohort to ensure enough interviews are accomplished and progress is being made at each stage of the process.

The collaborative and community based nature of this project means that additional goals will emerge for the community researchers to pursue in the future.

Project Milestones and Timeline

PROJECT MILESTONES AND TIMELINE													
ACTIVITY	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Construct PAR curriculum	X												
Secure recording equipment	X	X											
Advertising of research positions			X										
Information session for prospective artisan researchers			X										
Recruitment of 20 artisan researchers			X										
PAR training of researchers				X									
Researchers begin interviews				X									
Check in meeting and preliminary analysis				X									
Conferences with individual researchers (ongoing)					X								
Researchers' debriefing session					X								
Write up preliminary report						X							
Community event: researchers share their findings						X							
Interim project report due to the President's Office							X						
Data analysis								X	X	X			
Community event(s): share findings and solicit community feedback and development											X		
Conference presentation											X		
Write final report												X	
Final report due													X

Budget

	University of Massachusetts Creative Economy Initiatives Fund	Massachusetts Cultural Council, John and Abigail Adams Arts Program
20 Community Researchers \$500 Stipend Each	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Diverse Economy and Action Research Training	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Digital Recording Equipment	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
Transcription (\$1.25/min. x 6,000 min.)	\$7,500.00	
1 st Graduate Student (one semester 20 hrs./ week, incl. fringe and curriculum fee)	\$12,688.00	
2 nd Graduate Student/Associate Dean of Humanities (in kind, through Greenfield Community College)		(\$7,976.00)
Debriefing Session for Researchers		\$1,000.00
Conference/travel	\$4,000.00	
Publication of findings, print and web.		\$1,000.00
TOTAL	\$32,188.00	\$9,000.00

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROTOCOL

PROTOCOL APPLICATION FORM SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND EDUCATIONAL EXPEDITED REVIEW HUMAN SUBJECTS IN SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Protocol ID: 2010-0679
Title: Rethinking the Creative Economy: Participatory Action Research with Artists and Artisans in the Greater Franklin County, MA

Protocol Director Abby Templer		Degree: (MS/PhD)	Title Graduate Student	
Department Name Sociology	Mailing Address Thompson Hall 638 Amherst, MA 01003	Phone (573) 259-9718	Fax (413) 545-3204	E-mail atempler@soc.umass.edu
Human Subjects Training Completed? Y				

Co-Protocol Director Leo Hwang-Carlos		Degree: (MS/PhD)	Title Graduate Student	
Department Name Geosciences	Mailing Address 11 Conway St. Apt. 8 Greenfield, MA 01054	Phone 413-230-798 3	Fax	E-mail lhwang@geo.umass.edu
Human Subjects Training Completed? Y				

Other Contact		Degree:	Title	
Department Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Human Subjects Training Completed?				

Faculty Sponsor Richard Wilkie		Degree: Ph.D.	Title Professor	
Department Name Geosciences	Mailing Address Morrill Science Center 611, North Pleasant Street AMHERST, MA 01003-	Phone (413) 545-2078	Fax (413) 545-1200	E-mail rwilkie@geo.umass.edu

	9297			
Human Subjects Tutorial Completed?		Y		

Administrative Contact		Degree:	Title	
Department Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Human Subjects Training Completed?				

Other Personnel				
Name of Other Personnel	Degree:	Title	Department Name	Human Subjects Training Completed?

Subject Population(s) Checklist

Yes/No

- Minors (under 18)
- Pregnant Women
- Cognitively Impaired or Decisionally Challenged
- Older individuals (75 and over)
- Healthy Volunteers
- Students/Employees
- International Populations
- Prisoners
- Other (i.e., any population that is not specified above)

N
N
N
N
N
N
N
N
Y

The subjects will be adult artist and artisans of various ages, ethnicities, races, sexes and sexual orientations living/working in the Greater Franklin County, MA.

Study Location(s) Checklist

Yes/No

- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Baystate Medical
- University Health Services
- Hartford Hospital
- Other (Specify other Study Locations)

Y
N
N
N
Y

Research will primarily take place on-site (in the community or in the homes of the interviewees) but trainings and meetings will take place at Greenfield Community College.

General Checklist

Yes/No

- Training Grant?
- Funded Study (or proposal submitted to sponsor)?

N
Y

- Cooperating Institution(s)? Y

Greenfield Community College, Fostering Art and Culture Project
- Federally Sponsored Project? N
- Human blood, cells, tissues, or body fluids (tissues)? N
- Subjects will be paid for participation? Y

Funding Checklist

Funding - Grants/Contracts

Funding Administered By UNIVERSITY GAID #:	OGCA #: Funded By:
University of Massachusetts President's Office	
Principal Investigator: Prof. Richard Wilkie	
Grant/Contract Title <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Fostering Art and Culture in the Greater Franklin County</div>	
Y Are contents of this protocol the same as described in grant/contract proposal? N Is this a training grant? Y Are any subcontracts issued under this grant?	
Funding Administered By OTHER GAID #:	OGCA #: Funded By:
Massachusetts Cultural Council	
Principal Investigator: Leo Hwang-Carlos	
Grant/Contract Title <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Fostering Art and Culture Project</div>	
Y Are contents of this protocol the same as described in grant/contract proposal? N Is this a training grant? Y Are any subcontracts issued under this grant?	

Funding - Fellowships

NONE

Gift Funding

Dept. Funding

Other Funding (e.g., FRG, Healey)

Social, Behavioral & Education Research Expedited Review

A protocol must be no more than minimal risk (i.e., "not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life") AND must only involve human subjects in one or more of the following paragraphs.

Select one or more of the following paragraphs:

1. N Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.

- a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 31,32) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)
 - b) Research on medical devices for which
 - i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or
 - ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.
- 2. N **Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows:**
 - i) from healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or
 - ii) from other adults and children, considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.
- 3. N **Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by non invasive means.**
- 4. N **Collection of data through non invasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves. Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications.)**
Examples:
 - i) physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy;
 - ii) weighing or testing sensory acuity;
 - iii) magnetic resonance imaging;
 - iv) electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography;
 - v) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.
- 5. N **Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis). (NOTE: Some research in this paragraph may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)**
- 6. Y **Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.**
- 7. Y **Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.**

NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

1. Purpose of the study

a) Provide a brief lay summary of the purpose of the study.

The aim of this project is to highlight and support the diverse economic activity of artists and artisans in the Greater Franklin County. Making visible the rich economic activities already in practice can help the region foster a positive economic identity, shifting away from the portrayals of a region in need, and provide an opportunity to direct funding towards community centered, or endogenous economic practices. Through the use of participatory action research (PAR) with a group of artists and cultural ambassadors, we will create a community partnership of people who: are taught how to recognize various forms of economic activity, are given tools and resources to record and document these activities, and are provided with consultation to identify practices and endeavors that can strengthen those activities. With the Fostering Art and Culture Project (FACP) we will create a venue through which this data can be shared and disseminated across Franklin County and beyond.

b) What does the Investigator(s) hope to learn from the study?

Through this study the investigators hope: (1) to create a pool of indigenous knowledge about the broad range of economic activities that artists and artisans participate in, and how these activities impact the community; (2) create avenues to share this knowledge with the region to increase an understanding of how artists and artisans impact our communities; (3) work with artists and artisans to select activities that foster the growth and adaptation of existing diverse economic practices; and (4) assist the community in recognizing available resources and possible funding sources to support and strengthen their creative economy.

2. Study Procedures

a) Describe all study procedures.

1. The project co-coordinators will recruit 20 artists/artisans from the Greater Franklin county to act as artist/artisan-researchers. The project co-coordinators will provide the artist/artisan-researchers with training about (a) identifying diverse economic practices within the creative economy, (b) interview techniques, (c) how to use a digital audio recorder, (d) and complete CITI training for human subjects research (artist/artisan researchers will be added to the protocol after completing the training). Each artist/artisan-researcher will interview at least five peer artists/artisans over eight weeks.
2. After the artist/artisan-researchers conduct the initial two interviews, the researchers and project-coordinators will reconvene to: (a) share initial findings, (b) learn about collaborative analysis, (c) and troubleshoot any issues that have surfaced.
3. After all interviews are complete, the group will gather again and collaboratively share in the analysis process where we will: (a) identify themes and commonalities, (b) identify innovative or promising practices, (c) create an action plan for sharing/supporting these practices, including identifying needed or existing resources.
4. Host a community event where the artist/artisan-researchers can share the study

findings and start building community support for the action plans.

- b) **State if audio or video taping will occur. Describe what will become of the tapes after use, e.g., shown at scientific meetings, erased. Describe the final disposition of the tapes.**

We will use digital audio recorders to record interviews. Digital audio files will be kept on a password protected UDrive account. Only members of the research team will have access to this password.

We might video tape some portion of the training and community events. Video could be used during conference presentations, in the classroom, or for other educational purposes.

All audio and visual files will be destroyed 6 years after the completion of the grant.

- c) **State if deception will be used. If so, provide a rationale and describe debriefing procedures. Submit a debriefing script in Section #11 (Attachments).**

Deception will not be used.

3. Background

- a) **Describe past findings leading to the formulation of the study.**

This study is modeled after the research of Cameron and Gibson (2001) and Gibson-Graham (2006) who argue that highlighting diverse economic practices in a region can help foster a positive self-image for that region and its inhabitants. These diverse practices can also become the basis for a new form of regional development--one focused on existing community practices. Participatory action research is used because Cameron and Gibson (2001) and Gibson-Graham (2006) argue community members themselves are best situated to know these practices.

4.(a-f) Subject Population

- a) **State how many subjects you propose to use and state the rationale for the proposed number.**

Each artist/artisan-researcher (20) and co-coordinator (2) will interview 5 artists/artisans, bringing us to a total of 110 interviewees. We chose the maximum number of artist/artisan-researchers who we could pay to participate; maximizing the number of researchers allows us to interview the maximum number of artists/artisans, deepening our understanding of the diverse economic practices in the region.

- b) **Describe the subject population, including the age range, gender, ethnic background, and type of subjects (e.g. students, professors, subjects with learning disabilities, mental health disorders, etc.). Please incorporate specific inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g. physical and psychological health, demographic information, or other unique characteristics).**

The subjects will be adult (18 years or older) artist and artisans of various ages, ethnicities, races, sexes and sexual orientations living/working in the Greater Franklin County, MA.

- c) **State the number and rationale for involvement of potentially vulnerable subjects to be entered into the study, including minors, pregnant women, prisoners, economically and educationally disadvantaged, decisionally challenged, and homeless people.**

No potentially vulnerable subjects will be asked to participate.

- d) **If women, minorities, or minors are not included, a clear compelling rationale must be provided. Examples for not including minors: disease does not occur in children; drug or device would interfere with normal growth and development; etc.**

Minors are not included because this study targets the adult working-population.

- e) **State the number, if any, of subjects who are laboratory personnel, employees, and/or students. They should be presented with the same written informed consent. If compensation is allowed, they should also receive it.**

not applicable

- f) **State the number, if any, of subjects involved in research conducted abroad and describe any unique cultural, economic or political conditions.**

not applicable

4.(g-i) Subject Population

- g) **Describe your procedures for recruiting subjects, including how potential subjects will be identified for recruitment. Attach all recruitment materials in Section #11 (Attachments). Note: Potential subjects may not be contacted before IRB approval.**

Researchers will be recruited through print advertising in the Greenfield Recorder, email newsletter through the FACP, posting on Craigslist, and by word of mouth.

In addition, an information session for interested researchers will be held in September.

Interested parties will submit additional information and will be asked to participate in an interview to assist in selecting appropriate research candidates.

Interviewees will be recruited through snowball sampling.

- h) **Compensation. Explain the amount and type of compensation (payment, experimental credit, gift card, etc.), if any, that will be given for participation in the study. Include a schedule for compensation and provisions for prorating.**

Our study includes two populations: the artist/artisan-researchers and the artists/artisans they will interview. The interviewees will not receive compensation for participation in the study.

The artist/artisan-researchers will be paid \$500.00 for participating in the formal study period (approximately 25 hours between September and December) which includes time spent in trainings, meetings, conducting interviews, and analyzing data. Artist/artisan-researchers may choose to leave the study at anytime, but must complete at least one interview to receive partial payment of \$200.00. All payments will be made in December and will be prorated by participation as follows:

1st interview: \$200.00 (10hrs)
1st interview and second training: \$260.00 (13hrs)
2nd interview: \$300.00 (15 hrs)
3rd interview: \$340.00 (17hrs)
4th interview: \$380.00 (19hrs)
5th interview: \$420.00 (21hrs)
participation in full study: \$500.00 (25 hrs)

- i) **Please state: A: The total expected duration of the study, including the time expected for data analysis (e.g., This study is expected to last 1 year) AND B: How much time each subject is expected to be involved in the study (e.g., The involvement of each subject will be 1-session for a total of 90 minutes).**

Including data collection and analysis, the study is expected to last 1 year.

The artist/artisan-researchers will be extensively involved in data collection and analysis. It is estimated they could spend up to 25 hours/person on the project during the formal study period:

September-December, 2010.

Interviewees will be asked to participate in one, 60-120 minute interview. If they agree, they might also be contacted for brief follow-up interviews.

5. Risks

HHS Regulations define a subject at risk as follows: "...any individual who may be exposed to the possibility of injury, including physical, psychological, or social injury, as a consequence of participation as a subject in any research..." This also includes risks to subject confidentiality and any discomforts, hazards, or inconveniences.

For the categories below, include a description of risks.

a) Describe the risks related to:

Physical well-being

No more risk than that encountered in everyday activity.

Psychological well-being

No more risk than that encountered in everyday activity.

Economic well-being

For subjects engaged in underground economic practices, there is a risk that those practices may have an increased profile. Study participants are alerted to this risk in the informed consent.

Social well-being

Researchers and subjects who agree to be identified may have increased public visibility.

Breach of confidentiality (including audio/video taping)

Because the region will be named and specific areas in the region will be described, complete anonymity can not be guaranteed.

b) For research conducted abroad, describe any risks associated with the unique cultural or political environment.

not applicable

c) Discuss plans for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of a distressed subject.

A list of local resources will be provided to any distressed participant should they need or want it.

6. Benefits

a) Describe the potential benefit(s) to be gained by the subjects or by the acquisition of important knowledge which may benefit future subjects, etc. (This DOES NOT include compensation or extra credit).

While subjects might not directly benefit from this study, we hope that their participation will help highlight the diverse economic practices of artists and artisans in the region. We see the potential for artist and artisan knowledge and practices to be pooled and shared with others in the region and hope to create action plans to support these practices. The overall aim is to enhance the existing economic practices of regional artists/artisans and bolster the regional economic self-image.

7. Procedures to Maintain Confidentiality

a) **Describe the procedures in place which protect the privacy of the subjects and maintain the confidentiality of the data, as required by the federal regulations, if applicable.**

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of any information shared by participants. If participants wish to remain anonymous, we will label his/her study records with a code. A master key that links the participant's name and the code will be maintained in a separate location from the records. All information (including any codes to the data) will be kept in a secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed six (6) years after the close of the project. All electronic files (e.g., database, spreadsheet, etc.) containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the PI and co-coordinators of the research team will have access to the passwords.

b) **If information derived from the study will be provided to a government agency, or any other person or group, describe to whom the information will be given and the nature of the information.**

At the conclusion of this study, the project co-coordinators (and interested artist/artisan-researchers) may publish their findings. Information will be presented in summary format and, unless the participant requests otherwise, he/she will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

The findings from this study will also be shared with other artists and artisans in the Greater Franklin County through community events, through the Fostering Art and Culture Project, and presentations at regional and national conferences.

c) **Specify where and under what conditions study data will be kept, how specimens will be labeled and stored (if applicable), who has access to the data and specimens, and what will be available to whom.**

Artist/artisan-researchers will upload their digital audio files to a password protected UDrive account. Only the PI and project co-coordinators will have access to the data stored on this account. Transcriptions of the audio files will be shared with all members of the research team once identifying markers have been removed.

Each file will be stored under the code provided for anonymity. The names of participants will not be used for labeling or storing data (audio files and transcripts)

The master key which links the participant's name to their code will be stored on a separate UDrive account to which only the PI and project co-coordinators will have access.

8. Potential Conflict of Interest

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| a) | N | Do any of the involved investigators or their immediate family (as described below) have consulting arrangements, management responsibilities or equity holdings in the Sponsoring company, vendor(s), provider(s) of goods, or subcontractor(s)? |
| b) | N | Do any investigators or their immediate family have any financial relationship with the Sponsoring company, including the receipt of honoraria, income, or stock/stock options as payment? |
| c) | N | Is any Investigator(s) a member of an advisory board with the Sponsoring company? |
| d) | N | Do any investigators receive gift funds from the Sponsoring company? |
| e) | N | Do any investigators or their immediate family have an ownership or royalty interest in any intellectual property utilized in this protocol? |

"Immediate family" means a spouse, dependent children as defined by the IRS, or a domestic partner. If one or more of the above relationships exist, please include a statement in the consent form to

disclose this relationship. i.e., a paid consultant, a paid member of the Scientific Advisory Board, has stock or stock options, or receives payment for lectures given on behalf of the sponsor. The consent form should disclose what institution(s) or companies are involved in the study through funding, cooperative research, or by providing study drugs or equipment.

If you answer yes to any of the questions above, please go to the policies for more information: Policy on Conflicts of Interest Relating to Intellectual Property and Commercial Ventures
Conflict of Interest NSF/NIH Policy.

9. Informed Consent

You can add different Consent Forms, Alteration Forms, and Waivers. Provide consent process background information, in the table below, for each Consent Form(s), Alteration Form(s), and Waiver(s).

9.1 Consent Form artist/artisan researchers

Who is obtaining consent? The person obtaining consent must be knowledgeable about the study and authorized by the PI to consent human subjects.

Consent from the artist-researchers will be obtained by the project co-coordinators.

How is consent being obtained?

Written consent will be obtained through the use of an informed consent form. Potential study participants will be provided with the form and ample time to ask questions.

What steps are you taking to determine that potential subjects are competent to participate in the decision-making process?

The project co-coordinators will discuss the study with each potential subject to insure that he or she understands the following element of the study prior to their consent: (1) the purpose of the study; (2) what they will be asked to do as a study participant; and (3) the benefits or risks of participating. If a potential subject is does not appear to understand, they will not be considered competent to participate in the decision-making process.

9.2 Consent Form interviewees

Who is obtaining consent? The person obtaining consent must be knowledgeable about the study and authorized by the PI to consent human subjects.

Consent from the interviewees will be obtained by the project co-coordinators.

How is consent being obtained?

Written consent will be obtained through the use of an informed consent form. Potential study participants will be provided with the form and ample time to ask questions.

What steps are you taking to determine that potential subjects are competent to participate in the decision-making process?

The project co-coordinators will discuss the study with each potential subject to insure that he or she understands the following elements of the study prior to their consent: (1) the purpose of the study; (2) what they will be asked to do as a study participant; and (3) the benefits or risks of participating. If a potential subject is does not appear to understand, they will not be considered competent to participate in the decision-making process.

9.3 Consent Form stamped 08/19/10 - artist/artisan researchers

Who is obtaining consent? The person obtaining consent must be knowledgeable about the study and authorized by the PI to consent human subjects.

How is consent being obtained?

What steps are you taking to determine that potential subjects are competent to participate in the decision-making process?

9.4 Consent Form stamped 08/19/10 - interviewees

Who is obtaining consent? The person obtaining consent must be knowledgeable about the study and authorized by the PI to consent human subjects.

How is consent being obtained?

What steps are you taking to determine that potential subjects are competent to participate in the decision-making process?

10. Assent Background

All minors must provide an affirmative consent to participate by signing a simplified assent form, unless the Investigator(s) provides evidence to the IRB that the minor subjects are not capable of assenting because of age, maturity, psychological state, or other factors.

11. Attachments

Document Type	Document Name	Attached Date
Program Project Grant/List	UMass PAR Grant	07/16/2010
Program Project Grant/List	Mass Cultural Council Grant	07/16/2010
Cooperating Institution(s) Approval	Greenfield Community College Letter of Support	07/16/2010
Cooperating Institution(s) Approval	UMass Award Letter Creat Econ	07/16/2010
Cooperating Institution(s) Approval	Adams Grant Award Letter 2010	07/16/2010
Advertisements	TEMPLATE ADVERTISEMENT	07/16/2010
Other	Faculty Sponsor Statement	07/28/2010
Advertisements	TEMPLATE ADVERTISEMENT rev	08/10/2010
Information Sheets/Brochures	Sample Recruitment Script for Researchers to Interviewees	08/10/2010
Questionnaires	Interview Questions for Researcher Selection	08/10/2010
Questionnaires	Questions for Interviewees	08/10/2010
Other	fac spon state_cycle1	08/13/2010

Obligations

Obligations of the Principal Investigator are: Modifications - Changes in any aspect of the study (for example, project design, procedures, consent forms, advertising materials, additional key

personnel or subject population) will be submitted to the IRB for approval before instituting the changes; Consent Forms - All subjects will be given a copy of the signed consent form. Investigators will be required to retain signed consent documents for six (6) years after close of the grant or three (3) years if unfunded; Training - Human subject training certificates, including those for any newly added personnel, will be provided for all key personnel;

Adverse Events - All adverse events occurring in the course of the protocol will be reported to the IRB as soon as possible, but not later than ten (10) working days; Continuing Review - IRB Protocol Report Forms will be submitted annually at least two weeks prior to expiration, six weeks for protocols that require full review; Completion Report - The IRB will be notified when the study is complete. To do this, complete the IRB Protocol Report Form and select "Final Report."

Training - Human subject training certificates, including those for any newly added personnel, will be provided for all key personnel;

Adverse Events/Unanticipated Problems - All events occurring in the course of the protocol will be reported to the IRB as soon as possible, but not later than five (5) working days;

Continuing Review - IRB Protocol Report Forms will be submitted annually at least two weeks prior to expiration, six weeks for protocols that require full review;

Completion Report - The IRB will be notified when the study is complete. To do this, complete the IRB Protocol Report Form and select "Final Report."

Y The Principal Investigator has read and agrees to abide by the above obligations.

APPENDIX C

THE PROJECT PROCESS

The Institutional Review Board

In the beginning I was somewhat apprehensive about the institutional review board process. Conceptually Abby and I developed our methodology, however the institutional review board hurdle (for that is what it felt like initially) forced us to examine our plan in much finer detail than we had mapped out. In addition, our peers often reported back about their own challenges with receiving approval for their research projects from their institutional review board panels, so it was not without a little apprehension that we approached the task.

Similar to the processes we went through for grant applications, we needed to look at the project again and try to figure out how to explain what we were attempting to accomplish within the allotted word limits. And then, we were guided deeper and deeper into details, something that, in hindsight, was marvelously useful. Like teaching a class for the first time, we created lesson plans for the researcher trainings, developed a template for newspaper advertisements and email solicitations, we created handouts for the researchers, permission forms, and developed processes for coding and securing the data we would collect. In addition, the process also tasked us with an online training component where the history of review boards was surveyed, and low stakes quizzes were given on ethics and protocol.

Once the process was begun, again made much easier by having developed a strong methodology and having narratives we utilized for several grants, the

document was revised several times before submission, and then after submission a few elements of clarification were asked for and we were able to comply. As a whole, the process seemed to go much smoother than other experiences we had relayed to us, and the document continues to be a reference for the project when we have a question about protocol.

The IRB process forced us to pare down our prose and develop a concise description of the project:

The aim of this project is to highlight and support the diverse economic activity of artists and artisans in the Greater Franklin County. Making visible the rich economic activities already in practice can help the region foster a positive economic identity, shifting away from the portrayals of a region in need, and provide an opportunity to direct funding towards community centered, or endogenous economic practices. Through the use of participatory action research (PAR) with a group of artists and cultural ambassadors, we will create a community partnership of people who: are taught how to recognize various forms of economic activity, are given tools and resources to record and document these activities, and are provided with consultation to identify practices and endeavors that can strengthen those activities. With the Fostering Art and Culture Project (FACP) we will create a venue through which this data can be shared and disseminated across Franklin County and beyond.

Clarify our goals:

Through this study the investigators hope: (1) to create a pool of indigenous knowledge about the broad range of economic activities that artists and artisans participate in, and how these activities impact the community; (2) create avenues to share this knowledge with the region to increase an understanding of how artists and artisans impact our communities; (3) work with artists and artisans to select activities that foster the growth and adaptation of existing diverse economic practices; and (4) assist the community in recognizing available resources and possible funding sources to support and strengthen their creative economy.

And begin to quantify elements of the process in terms of hours we expected the researchers to work, how the trainings would proceed, and the compensation researchers would receive. In addition, the process had us examine what material

was confidential and what could be shared. This was particularly crucial since the methodology was participatory action research and the hope was that both the research data and its analysis would be usable by the entire research team.

The process also had us examine some of the finer details about what ages we would include, as well as reinforcing the inherent dangers or potential pitfalls of any research that includes human subjects. We had to think through, what potential issues would arise? How might the research benefit or endanger participants? And even at this stage we were aware of the potential for a transformative experience.

While subjects might not directly benefit from this study, we hope that their participation will help highlight the diverse economic practices of artists and artisans in the region. We see the potential for artist and artisan knowledge and practices to be pooled and shared with others in the region and hope to create action plans to support these practices. The overall aim is to enhance the existing economic practices of regional artists/artisans and bolster the regional economic self-image.

Perhaps equally as important as the process and preparation that went into developing the IRB paperwork was the transformative effect the process had for the coordinators. Just as developing a methodology paper and applying and receiving two grants for the project had made us surer of ourselves, receiving IRB approval seemed to brand the project with legitimacy. It had the effect of moving us from a realm of laypeople doing research, or novice practitioners, to university certified researchers. Of course we were still novices and were able to make plenty of mistakes, but we still had the official imprimatur of the university, and that was a strong unanticipated motivator to move forward.

Recruiting the Researchers

When Abby and I met to talk about how we would select researchers, we understood the selection of a team was a very intentional undertaking. Rather than a random sampling, we were seeking collaborators who we would be working with for the better part of a year or longer. To help us define the process we created a kind of visual job description that we later integrated into our presentations to the prospective researchers.

Around a circle representing a potential researcher, we created four broad categories of important concepts and crucial work of the project. These we labeled: Rethinking the Creative Economy, Interview Techniques, Asset Mapping, and Interviews. Within the circle we listed various skills or assets we imagined as important and grouped them near one of the four categories they seemed most related to, and if a quality was shared by more than one category, as several did, we located them between two or more categories. What emerged was a kind of visual hierarchy of preferred qualifications for a potential researcher.

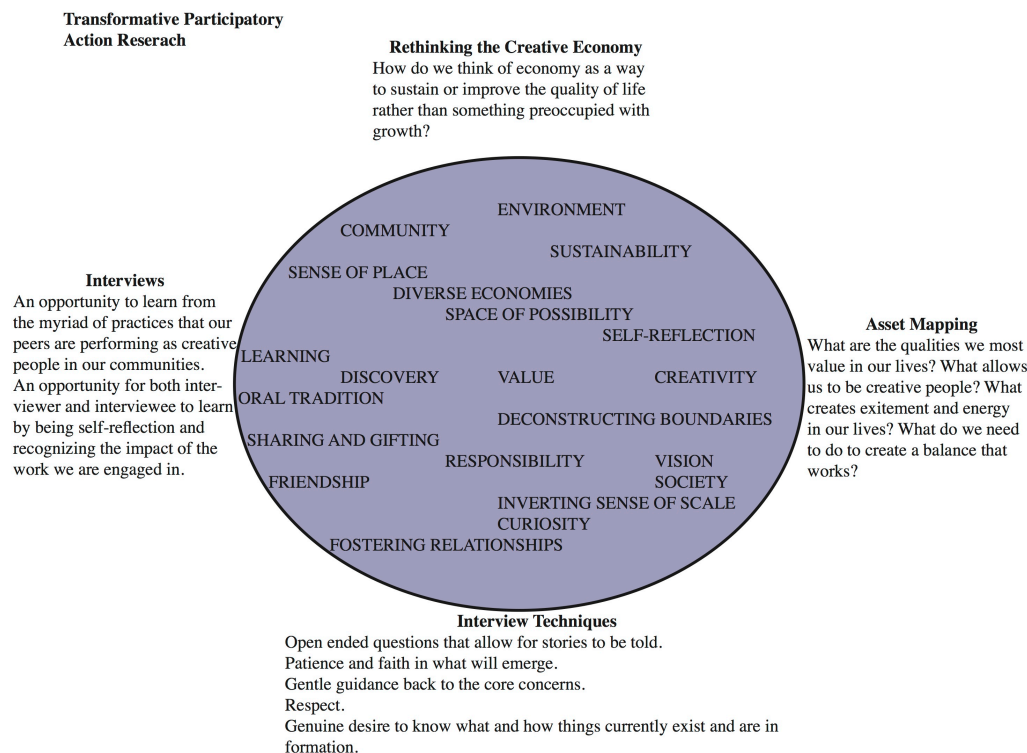


Figure 25: Qualities for a Researcher

Under the Rethinking the Creative Economy heading, we sought a definition of economy that was focused on sustaining or improving the quality of life rather than an exclusive focus on growth. We felt that the ideal candidates would demonstrate an openness to a broad sense of economy through how they talked about the environment, sustainability, community, sense of place, their personal visions of economies, and how they might foster a space of possibility. A potential researcher who talked about his or her environment with an awareness of the human impact, seemed like a person who could also understand the connection of environment to quality of life. Someone who expressed the importance of community might be attuned to the sense of an ecosystem where people work together in interrelated

ways that foster a sense of place, and enable the sustainability of community assets. While we didn't assume the potential researchers would know the term diverse economies, we hoped they might be able to talk about or have an awareness of different modes of exchange that occurred outside of a capitalist framework. Perhaps the most important quality we were looking for, and connected to all the other categories, was the idea of creating a space of possibility. We wanted researchers who did not feel like there were only needs and problems. We wanted researchers who felt they had something to offer and were excited to help their peers and community create something new or better.

The asset-mapping category stemmed from a desire for people who had a degree of self-reflection about what was important for them and how to explore different definitions of value. We hoped people could move beyond binary thinking and embrace creative expressions of value and how those non-binary expressions of value could be utilized differently. We understood that asset mapping might not be an existing skill, but we sought people who could enter into conversation that explored what non-capitalist assets might exist and what they could do with them.

We were also interested in people who were open to learning and discovery throughout the interview process. Clearly, we needed people who were comfortable with conversing orally, but also people who could nurture and value the oral story telling process that would generate the qualitative data. By drawing in people who could act as guides rather than guards in the interview process, we hoped to foster a sense of community, sharing, and curiosity—a real desire to learn from one another. And finally, we wanted people who valued the individual lived experience more than

the statistical data set. We tried to encourage conversation on the difference between narrow focus but high-resolution information, verses a 10,000-foot, wide panorama of information that has very low resolution.

We imagined our holistic job qualifications to be malleable, that while the ideal researcher would have all of these qualities, many people would have different strengths and weights to the skill sets. The only minimum qualifications were that people needed to be comfortable enough with their communication skills to interview their peers and work as part of the research team, have an interest in learning about and working with an asset-based approach for understanding our communities, and possess the ability to stick with the project for its duration.

We then advertised the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project's information sessions in local newspapers, email list serves, with cultural organizations, and we tapped into our own networks of artists and artisans and encouraged artists and artisans to do the same. We also intentionally targeted a diversity of ages, genders, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations, when possible. We did this by personally reaching out to individuals by email, telephone, and face-to-face conversations.

At the information sessions, Abby and I gave a formal presentation where we talked about how Franklin County was often seen as a region in need and lacking economic agency and how in the context of the creative economy, solutions typically focused on bringing external resources to the region in the form of tourism and industry. We also shared our premise that Franklin County was actually a region awash with assets and economic activities that fell outside the traditional

categorization as economic. We wanted to train a team of artists and artisans to catalog the diverse practices to bolster a positive self-image for the region and provide new ways of thinking about development that were generated by the community.

We shared the Census and Bureau of Labor statistics emphasizing Franklin County's poverty and low wage earnings, and how pursuing external sources for solutions often leads to solutions that are disconnected from the lives and practices of regional artists and artisans because these solutions often utilize growth as a measure of success and often do not measure other issues that are more important to local artists and artisans. We then tried to give an example that the artists and artisans could relate to.

Artists and crafts people are often guided by multiple visions and life missions that are tied to personal passion, a different way of seeing the world and their community, and an active role in creating something specific to his or her experience with place, community, life, etc. For many of us, growth is not the solution, instead we seek ways to maintain balance. Balance between caring for family members, earning an income, allowing for self-expression, etc.

Admittedly, this was an easy sell for most of the artists and artisans attending and many people nodded their heads in agreement. We continued to demonstrate the divide by talking about the traditional metrics of ticket sales, tax revenue, hotel and lodging statistics, numbers of visitors, growth from previous years, and of course income and unemployment. Counter to that narrative we offered hidden economic activity like sharing music equipment between groups, shared studio space, cooperative owning of expensive equipment, collaborative purchasing, trading work

for work, bartering between artists and artisans, volunteer and benefit work or donations, and unpaid labor.

We then introduced them to Ken Byrne's illustration of the community economy as an iceberg (Figure 1) where the capitalist economy is visible above the waterline, but the community economy is much larger and exists out of sight under the water line. We wanted to highlight the practices that were already in existence, but hidden below the waterline. We did not need to highlight the capitalist practices that were already visible above the waterline. In order to do this, we would look at a diverse economy from an asset-based perspective where we focused on what artists and artisans were doing well, and what they contributed to each other and their communities. By focusing on assets we could strengthen practices that made our own communities stronger and practices, activities, and products that we could export to other communities or regions.

We illustrated the shift from needs to assets as a movement from a need of more tourist dollars, more industry, more growth, more ticket sales, a lack of galleries, a lack of performance space, a lack of jobs, and a need for skill development, to strong community collaboration, formal and informal cooperative work, deep connections to environment and sense of place, barter and trade networks, and the quality of life for artists and artisans in the region.

We then shared the primary goals for the project:

- Generate a pool of knowledge about the broad range of economic activities that artists and artisans participate in, and how these activities impact the community;
- Explore what sustainability means for artists and artisans, and how they engage in a lifestyle that prioritizes creativity and self-expression.

- Work with artists and artisans to select activities that foster the growth and adaptation of existing diverse economic practices;
- Create avenues to share this knowledge with the region to increase an understanding of how artists and artisans impact our communities; and
- Help foster the development or expansion of promising practices uncovered in the study.

And we gave a job description for the approximately 25 hours and compensation of \$500.00. We stressed that the artists and artisans that joined the project were forming a research team and that we would work alongside one another and work together to analyze the interviews.

- Participate in a two day training
- Complete an online training about research ethics
- Conducting five, one-hour interviews with peer artisans and artists. We suggest completing one interview per week.
- Check in with the project co-coordinators once a week, meeting bi-weekly to drop-off digital audio files.
- Participate in collaborative analysis
- And the option of participating in community events and regional conferences where we share the study findings.

We also presented the artists and artisans with our timeline with set dates that we asked participants to set aside for the project. There were two trainings (Sept. 14-15, 4-8 pm or Sept. 18-19, 9-1 pm), one on weekday evenings, and one on weekend mornings. The artists and artisans could pick whichever one fit their schedule better. In the trainings we would learn how to identify diverse economic practices within the creative economy, develop interview techniques, and learn how to use the digital recorders. They would reconvene after their first interviews were completed (Oct. 4) to discuss what they found, learn about collaborative analysis, and troubleshoot any issues that surfaced. And then, when all the interviews were completed, we would meet again (Nov. 1) for a collaborative analysis process where we hoped to identify themes and commonalities, innovative or promising practices,

and create an action plan for sharing or supporting those practices and identifying existing resources. We also held open the possibility for the artists and artisans to participate in a regional Creative Economy Summit organized by the Fostering Art and Culture Project for that spring (March 18).

We wrapped up the information session with our graphical job qualifications diagram and stressed our desire to find people who were comfortable interviewing their peers and working as part of a team, interested in an asset-based approach, and were able to stick with the project for its duration. We also hoped that we could find some researchers who wanted to implement some of the new ideas that emerged.

We concluded by restating how we wanted to shift the way we thought about the region's economy by focusing on assets, making visible the hidden diverse economic practices of artists and artisans, and by working together to share multiple visions and narratives that could empower individuals, small groups, and maybe even regions, to have the power to act and create. We then invited people to ask questions and, if they were still interested in participating in the project, to submit their contact information on a signup sheet.

The most surprising aspect was how easily the artists and artisans were able to grasp the key ideas of an asset-based perspective, the validity of a diverse economy, and the need to explore something beyond capitalism. Most of the people who attended the information sessions seemed to carry stories of struggle that reminded me of the Latrobe Valley families in Australia (Cameron & Gibson, *Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein*, 2005). The artists and

artisans were ready and actively seeking alternatives to a capitalocentric model that pushed them towards unsustainable lifestyles, and pushed them towards sacrificing quality of life for a false promise of satiated desire.

The presentations went smoothly, and the general atmosphere was one of deep gratitude for the context of the project, and great excitement. The group also found many connections amongst themselves and people traded contact information and shared their own efforts to create community and engage in activism. This would emerge as a major thread in the results of our research, so it is interesting to note its appearance so early in the process.

It is also interesting to look back and think about how practiced our presentation was. We had run through how to talk about the project in multiple formats, in our graduate courses, with each other, but this was the first time we were presenting the project to the population we hoped to engage with. It felt very rewarding to have the hard work of preparation pay off with an audience that could access and understand the material, and perhaps even more important, empathize with the epistemology of the project.

After Julie Graham died, Abby and I went through her papers in the University of Massachusetts archives. Contained in her notebooks and papers were the constant revisions of presentations where scripts were doctored back and forth, there were long email exchanges of edits, and a video of a practice presentation. The documentation portrayed a careful managing of style and body language, much as a director works with actors in the theater. Our own work at practicing presentation style and language helped us to become comfortable with our roles, to model a

collaborative work style, and helped instill confidence in what we were trying to convey, the translation of the community economies discourse for consumption by artists and artisans.

For the most part, the artist and artisan group was organically self-selected. Artists and artisans who were not interested or could not commit to participating opted out. In the end we were able to accommodate everyone who attended the information sessions and wanted to join the research team. We had enough funding to accommodate an additional two researchers beyond those that self identified in the information sessions and there were three people who couldn't attend any of the information sessions and we interviewed and presented the same material individually in person or over the phone. The individual process was less practiced than our formal presentations and I think that reflected in one artist who was not selected and her frustration, which was voiced later by a peer who was on the team, and how she was vocal about her negative feelings about the project in the community. Albeit less practiced, the selection process centered on the interviewees' willingness to examine artists and artisans from an asset-based perspective of possibility, and the candidate who was not chosen did not demonstrate that in her interview and instead tried to continually return the conversation to needs and problems that artists and artisans had. So ultimately, it was a conscious ethical choice to not include her voice in the study. However, the choice did have consequences for the individual who felt she should have been included, and how her experience then added to her narrative of problems.

The Training

While planning the researcher training sessions we tried to keep in mind two main ideas, learning by doing, and staying awake by doing. We recognized that we were compressing a lot of material into two days and we needed to be effective at conveying both conceptual frameworks and technical details in a way that was accessible and tangible to the artists and artisans. We were buoyed by the successful information sessions and that gave us some ideas about how to approach developing the training, however we were still careful to not be too overly confident about our ability to translate our academic and grant focused writing into the applied format of a training.

We began the trainings by reviewing the project in an abbreviated version of the information sessions we did to refresh people's memory, then after helping them fill out contractual forms for their stipend we collaboratively generated ground rules. The main components we felt were important were maintaining a respectful and safe place, and maintaining the flexibility that everything was negotiable through discussion. The artist and artisan researchers agreed to this easily. The second ground rule, at first glance may seem overly broad, but within a context of an environment of respect, it empowered every one of the participants with the ability to ask questions and alter possible directions and this was met with broad approval and appreciation. Particularly for this group, they appreciated the broader more interpretive construct of ground rules, opposed to the very structured state institution's contractual paperwork where every box needed to be completed fully in accordance with a page of instructions.

Abby and I began the training with a brief discussion about how the artists and artisans defined an economy. First the artists and artisans wrote down their ideas about what an economy consisted of, then they shared their ideas with the larger group where each person's vision of what might be included in an economy helped inform everyone else's ideas. The artists and artisans then had an opportunity to revise their ideas, shared again, and this time we Abby and I used the diverse economy iceberg diagram to highlight the visible and invisible, formal and informal, and acknowledged and unacknowledged aspects of the economy. We also talked about deconstructing binaries in the context of the economy where economic practices were too complex to be defined in a binary, this or that, kind of way. Rather all aspects of the economy had the potential to be many things simultaneously. We also used deconstructing the binary to explain, our positionality, the assumptions we hold or develop from our life experiences that help shape both how we see and how we experience the world. For each person in the room our positionalities would affect us in a way that might be different from someone sitting right beside us. We hoped to inspire a critical contemplative self-awareness so we could recognize how our own experiences were not universal experiences.

For the artists and artisans, the transition from a capitalocentric reading of the economy to a diverse community economy was very quick and natural. While defining the economy started in a fairly standard way with phrases like, the stock market, employment, and global corporations, with very little prompting, the artists and artisans were able to move from the mainstream definitions of economy that had very little impact on their own day to day lives, to a definition of economy that

worked on a personal scale of practices they were engaged in, like bartering, gifting, family care, and volunteering. By shifting the definition of an economy to a more personal scale, it made the exercise much more exciting and animated, and what started as an exercise that produced voices tinged with anxiety or anger, then became something stimulating smiles and cheers of agreement.

By using the shift that occurred with the artists and artisans, we were able to transfer the experience into how positionality impacted the way we looked at things. To examine the economy from one perspective produced a certain range of examples and feelings, and then to look at an economy from another perspective allowed for a whole different range of examples and feelings. Abby and I then used our own epistemologies to demonstrate how our differences impacted how we interpreted a shared experience. For me, growing up Korean in a predominantly Caucasian community heightened an awareness of difference and an internal struggle between trying to assimilate and fit in, and trying to define my own hybrid heritage and identity. I then explained how these experiences helped make me more receptive to questioning dominant narratives and creating alternate narratives, which in our application meant looking for diversity in economies. The artists and artisans were also able to speak to their own challenges and successes that led to very similar movements towards the kinds of life choices that enabled them to become artists and artisans. This identity was both freeing from the expectations of traditional wage employment, and material successes like fancy cars, but also fraught with challenges securing stable housing, healthcare, and other basic necessities.

We then introduced the concept of asset assessment as an alternative to needs assessment through asset mapping. Pairing up artists and artisans we had each group share a large sheet of paper where they could catalog their assets on their half of the paper. The artist and artisans were encouraged to cheat by looking at their partner's assets to help inform their own. Then within each group they interviewed their partner to learn more about the assets they had written on their half of the sheet, and then they reported back to the group about their partner's assets.

Each group was also asked to describe the process of coming up with their assets and the kinds of blocks that occurred when they were trying to think of their assets. The researchers talked about initially being fixated on marketable skills, things that they imagined were measurable or monetizable, like quantities of things, but working with another person they were able to move more towards things that were qualitative and based more on passion and description. Seeing their partners explore the qualitative and explain it, created a sense of intimacy that helped them connect with each other.

As the exercise came to a close, the group had created a catalog of assets that spanned across each of the people. They included things like equipment and studio space, to an ability to organize, woodworking skills, magazine and book design, and elder care. Seeing all the assets listed together generated a lot of excitement where intuitively the artists and artisans were connecting the dots between assets that could be linked together to create something. They talked amongst each other asking for contact information so they could talk later. The artists and artisans were

connecting on an intimate human level with people they had met just a few hours before. At the beginning of the exercise it was very challenging for the artists and artisans to come up with assets they could write down because they were fixated on physical things that could be turned into money, but when they talked with each other, there was a synergy that allowed for connection and excitement. They were discovering things that they already possessed that were also valuable. We talked about how they might encounter these same kinds of inhibitors when trying to interview other artists about their assets and encouraged them to utilize similar techniques that they used with each other, allowing for openings to emerge, asking open ended questions, figuring out how to keep the story rolling, and exploring the multiple entry points of connection into a conversation.

To end the day, we talked about how looking at diverse economies through assets allows us to reimagine our environment into a place of possibility.

Particularly pertinent in the midst of an economic recession, we highlighted how often doomsday portrayals in the media, moralism about the economic folly of the poor, or us verses them dichotomies defined our environment, however, when we shifted the focus from an abstract big national or global picture to local communities and the interconnected importance of the immediate environment on a personal level, then we could see how our actions could have an immediate impact on our surroundings and community

At the end of the day the artist and artisan researchers were given recorders and encouraged to read through the instructions and play with them before coming to the next day's session.

The second day began with a somewhat technical process of reviewing the required confidentiality and consent forms and how to be as transparent as possible about how the interviews would be used. The researchers experienced the process first hand by filling out their own confidentiality and consent forms and the demographics questionnaire. This was an active process where they asked questions about the forms and as a group we helped create suggestions or answers. We then moved on to research techniques.

Starting where the first day of training left off, on positionality, we discussed how the researcher shapes the data he or she collects and how that data is then interpreted. Rather than pretend that positionality did not exist, we accepted its existence and utilized that positionality to emphasize a human interaction, rather than a faux-mechanical one. We encouraged the researchers to utilize the lived experiences of their interviewees as ways to adjust their questions to draw out further stories or explorations. We also recognized that there was a negotiated range of comfort and discomfort that occurred during an interview and that it was acceptable to recognize both.

To help start an interview, we gave the researchers a list of suggested questions. We emphasized that we were looking for were the stories not a correct answer. The most important skill was how to draw out the story from the interviewee. We used the metaphor of drawing water from a well. One needs to pull on the rope, hand over hand, to elicit the bucket of water. The positionality of the researchers would create the basis for the research. We were all interested in rethinking the creative economy and we trusted that would emerge in our

conversations organically. While we didn't require it, we also suggested taking notes in addition to the audio recordings so it could help to remember a follow up question or in order to remember something to emphasize in the debriefings at the end of the project. We made sure that everyone understood that, within time constraints, they would not be able to get everything from an interviewee, but hopefully they would get the most important examples and stories, and while some interviewees would be happy for the interview to go over an hour, we asked everyone to be mindful of their time and ensure the interviewees were mutually willing to continue talking, if that was the case.

We then began a somewhat complex process of teaching the researchers how to use the digital recorders, how to organize their digital files, and cautioned them about background noise. This was somewhat complicated by the fact that there were two different brands of digital recorders, however, once everyone was settled in the researchers were paired with a partner and they had an hour to interview one of the pair. We then broke for half an hour to discuss how it went, talk about where people got stuck, and strategize about what was helpful to get unstuck, and then we gave them another hour to interview the other person. Abby and I moved about the group helping with technical or process questions. At the end of the second hour we had completed our first round of interviews and collected the digital files and paperwork over lunch.

After lunch we talked about the collective debriefing, how we would come together at the end of the process and share what we had learned and collectively generate a narrative of our experience. We also gave our researchers a call for

artists announcement, where they could participate in a culminating art show by the researchers where we would showcase visual and performing arts and crafts.

Finally, before letting our researchers loose into the wild, we revisited the idea of rethinking an economy as a diverse economy and how we generated asset maps that were inclusive rather than exclusive. It was through this inclusivity that we generated a sense of a shared moment and of a collaborative future.

Reframing individuals as subjects rather than as objects of economic development and renarrativizing the potential trajectory of regional development unleashed positive energies that we felt could be harnessed toward building community-based enterprises and mobilizing community economies. (Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, 2006)

In the course of the trainings, the artist and artisan researchers shifted from an identity where they were “objects” that were affected by the economy, to an identity where they were “subjects” with autonomy to enact their own vision of an economy.

Debriefing

In November the Rethinking the Creative Economy Project held our final formal meeting with the researchers where we had our group debriefing. As the researchers arrived, we gave them map pins and tabs where they could label the medium of the people they interviewed and locate them on the map. We also gave them thank you cards, and an invitation to participate in the researchers’ art show.

We began our formal presentation by celebrating the completion of eighty-three interviews totaling 3459 minutes, at that point in time (there were more that would be completed late). They were in the process of completing approximately 25 hours of work on the project. We reviewed the diverse economy iceberg image, and

then shared some of the findings Abby and I found in our interviews to model how we might share what we found.

Phyllis shared with us the concept of innovation dinners, where local restaurants donated food for a community meal where all the people in attendance paid \$20. During the meal, people could present a proposal for an art project, and at the end of the meal all the people in attendance voted on their favorite project and the recipient received the collected funds. They had organized a kind of community crowd sourcing for artists.

Robin shared with Abby and I the role various mentors had played in his life. Without his mentors he would never have explored music and opera to the extent he has been able to. This, in turn, has inspired in him with the desire to return the favor and mentor other people in their pursuit of creative endeavors.

Kiran shared how volunteering for a local community of artists provided her with the skill sets she needed for her current job as co-coordinator of the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center. What she did for the community as unpaid labor, nonetheless benefited her in ways that allowed her to continue working professionally in the arts, both with her own creative work, and with community organizing work.

Jessamyn discovered a patron of the arts who ran an informal colony for women artists with subsidized housing. Jessamyn was particularly passionate about the need for subsidized safe housing, and found a likeminded woman who ultimately invited Jessamyn to move to the colony.

Deborah was gifted studio space by a community member who appreciated her paintings. When the community member overheard Deborah's challenges with

working in a small section of her apartment, she offered a whole section of an unused barn on her property. Deborah converted the section of the barn into her studio and proceeded to paint a series of landscapes from the farm in tribute to the gifting of space and the gift of inspiration of the landscape.

Despite the common narrative that artists in the region were suffering from a lack of possibility, that the glass was half empty, we demonstrated that the glass is also half full. There are many examples of positive asset-based activities occurring in the region. Abby shared a series of global maps drawn from different perspectives and we talked about how reorienting ourselves to an asset-based perspective allowed us to see things in a different light.

Abby and I shared a few general themes that emerged from our interviews. First many of the interviewees were motivated to engage with their community by a social justice or an activist ethic. Spirituality, or a sense of connection to something larger, motivated many of the interviewees, and many interviewees spent some time questioning what it means to be an artist. We then asked our researchers to share their themes that emerged and had them write them on paper that we hung around the room. The researchers then walked around the room and added comments about what ideas moved them or appealed to them. We suggested comments could also be quantitative, where researchers saw similar assets or themes in their own interviews, what we called “ah ha” comments where the asset or idea connected with something the researcher saw elsewhere or made the researcher think of another connection, and that people could comment where there was already existing avenues for support for a particular idea. These debriefing findings (Table

3) were only the beginning stages of analysis, but even this preliminary step created a rich sense of possibility and agency among the artist and artisan researchers. It allowed the researchers a small window into the kinds of assets and projects that might emerge from the interview transcripts.

Table 3: Debriefing Assets and Projects

Assets	Examples	Benefits
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artist to artist • artist to greater community • experienced to neophyte • the art of creating community • creating community space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross-pollination of ideas • mutual support • coming together as a tapestry where each person is a thread • tension • feedback • empowering • serving a larger group
Historical, Cultural, and Ancestral Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making space for multiple forums • where do we come from? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity makes a strong community • informs the creative process • artistic voice informed by a collective consciousness
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experienced to neophyte • giving to others means we get more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catalyst for more creativity • break apart preconceptions • see things anew • allow inspiration to come • inspire self and inspire others • reciprocity
Creative Solutions to Survival Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe housing • food • healthcare • transportation • finances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community • barn building approach • pooling resources • micro lending • artists who drive to work • balance between survival and art • what does survival mean? • who can get our work out into the world?

The Triangle of Art, Community, and Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of the importance of a creative economy • also, Storr's inspiration, incubation, creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map a creative process • incubation is absolutely necessary • each influences the other
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solitude coexists with collaboration • some people need constant stimuli • collaboration as a form of recharging • cooperatives exist to meet the needs of a community
Artist as Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • waking into other people's lives • reeducating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates the potential of how a community of artists fit together • possibility does exist
Importance of Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grants • gifting/loaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make community • make money • political messaging
Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give it time • receive feedback • mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we can't make the perfect image
Participating in a Community Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making space for their art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deepening ties • deepening commitment over time • how can individual needs for work also meet community needs?
Possible Projects		
Project	Process	Outcomes
Amass Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catalog groups doing innovative things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations like the Artisans of Western Mass
Collective History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the history of artists in the valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating a knowledge record
Creative Process Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map a creative process from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show people how the creative economy works

	inception to end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • even for work done in isolation, there is the influence of the community
Artist's Survival Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to survive as an artist in the valley • balance between survival and art • balancing art and money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collected resources • ideas • examples of balance

APPENDIX D

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE PHASE I ART SHOW

Featuring the work of:
Kiran Bhownik *Dan Campbell* *Jodi Campbell* *Leo Hwang-Carlos* *Andy Chase* *Morning Star Chenwen* *Heather Cohen*
George Moonlight Denis *Eric DeLuca* *Jeenne Douillard* *Amy Gardiner* *Jarilyn Kolbin* *Phyllis Labenowski* *Zoe Ma* *Kim Perkhurst*
Robin C. Parsons *Brad Peters* *Cheryl Rezendes* *Jen Ross* *Jessamyn Smyth* *Abby Templer* *Rochleigh Z. Wolfe*

APRIL 1-30 2011
CREATING MULTIPLE REALITIES
Sat. April 2 Opening Reception 2-6
Thurs. April 7 Amherst Art Walk 5-8
Sat. April 30 Reception & Silent Auction 2-6
www.REFLECTINGTHECREATIVEECONOMY.org

Exhibition Dates: April 1-30, 2011
Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5pm.
(Special arrangements for private showing available)

NACUL CENTER GALLERY
592 MAIN ST.
AMHERST, MA 01002
413 256-8025

For more info:
Rochleigh Z. Wolfe (Exhibit Coordinator) 413-863-8031
www.rethinkingthecreativeeconomy.org

PHASE 2 COMING FALL 2011
@ THE BARNES GALLERY, Leverett Crafts & Arts

This project was funded through a grant from
University of Massachusetts, President's Creative Economy Fund



Rethinking the Creative Economy Project
Presents

"Creating Multiple Realities Phase I"
Multi Media Exhibit
Featuring

Kiran Bhowmik*Don Campbell*Judi Campbell*Leo Hwang-Carlos*Andy
Chase*Morning Star Chenven*Heather Cohen
*George Moonlight Davis*Eric DeLuca*Jeanne Douillard*Amy
Gardiner*Jerilyn Kolbin*Phyllis Labanowski*Zoe Ma*Kim
Parkhurst*Robin C. Parsons*Brad Peters*Cheryl Rezendes*Jan
Ross*Jessamyn Smyth*Abby Templer*Rochleigh Z. Wholfe

NACUL Center Gallery 592 Main St. Amherst, Ma. 01002 413 256-8025
Exhibition Dates: April 1-30, 2011
Opening Reception: April 2, 2-6pm
Closing Reception & Silent Auction: April 30, 2-6pm
Amherst Art Walk: Thursday, April 7, 5-8pm
Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5pm
Rochleigh Z Wholfe (Exhibit Coordinator) 413 863-5031
Funded through a grant from UMass President's Creative Economy Fund

1 **PHASE** **IN ARTISTS WE TRUST** **1** **PHASE**

TWENTY ONE **PARTICIPATING ARTIST/RESEARCHERS**
EXHIBITION OF PERFORMANCE AND VISUAL ART



Saturday, April 2 **OPENING RECEPTION/SILENT AUCTION** 2-6
 Thursday, April 7 **AMHERST ART WALK** 5-8
 Saturday, April 30 **CLOSING RECEPTION/SILENT AUCTION** 2-6

GALLERY HOURS: M-F 9-5
 NACUL CENTER GALLERY 592 MAIN ST. AMHERST, MA
 exhibition coordinator: Rochleigh Z. Wholfe 413.863.5031

2 **PHASE COMING THIS FALL** **1** **PHASE**

FUNDED IN PART BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS PRESIDENT'S CREATIVE ECONOMY FUND

1 **APRIL 1-30** **1**
CREATING MULTIPLE REALITIES



1 **www.RETHINKINGTHECREATIVEECONOMY.com** **1**

APPENDIX D

THE RETHINKING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY CHAPBOOK

Rethinking the Creative Economy



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**Participatory Action Research with Artists and Artisans
in the Greater Franklin County**



Jessamyn Smyth compiled this chapbook from the wonderful work of Project Co-Coordinator Abby Templer and Leo Hwang-Carlos, the team of Project Researchers, and the words of those artists and artisans who so graciously allowed us to interview them.

Many thanks to worker-owned cooperative **Collective Copies!**

Artists and Artisans

The aim of this project is to highlight and support the diverse economic activity of artists and artisans in Greater Franklin County. We would like to thank all the fantastic artists and artisans who agreed to participate and make this study a success.

Working with artists and artisans to make visible the rich economic activities already in practice can help the region foster a positive economic identity, shifting away from the portrayals of a region in need, and provide an opportunity to direct funding towards community-centered economic practices.

Our goals are to create a community partnership of people to create a pool of local knowledge about the broad range of economic activities that artists and artisans participate in, and how these activities impact the community; to share this knowledge with the region to increase an understanding of how artists and artisans impact our communities; to work with artists and artisans to foster the growth and adaptation of existing diverse economic practices; and to assist the community in recognizing available and possible resources to support and strengthen the creative economy.

“Via writing [and all art], we discover that here, in the sacred and provisional space of the story, the play, [the painting, the sculpture, the wood, the music, the warp, the weft], or the poem, there exist no strangers, only fellow creatures—others to be met, and engaged eye to eye.”

Eric Darton, "Letter to the Goddard Community"

22 RESEARCHERS

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Openings, Invitations, Ignitions:

entering the artist's space and history

All the researchers were moved by the intimate experience of being invited into not just people's homes and studios, but their life stories and creative identities. Here are some of the things people shared with us:



"The essence of the people in the struggle and the suffering, all of that is completely embedded in me and who I am."

"When the little light-bulb went off in my head it was like: wait. You can write about anything you want."

"...I thought they were all drawings, I didn't realize that they were brushstrokes and I was trying to copy the lines that I saw in the paper with a pencil, and that's when my father told me that, no, that was paint. So he got me a box of Prang watercolors."

"We became dear, dear friends...it wasn't an abstract idea, it was like, here was my friend [the artist], and she got me in touch with my feelings...and they started to become. To become artistic. I loved writing."

"I would go out in the neighborhood I would collect little pebbles about the size of a quarter and I would paint them different colors and put a bug or something on it. And then I would go around and ask my neighbors if they wanted to buy a pretty painting. A painted rock, for a penny. So I have been selling paintings on rocks ever since. Now I am painting on slate."

"My eldest brother taught me how to use his reel to reel tape recorder when I was four...and after that I was always recording. ...constructing something in this tenuous medium – you can't actually, physically touch it – you can handle the medium itself but that's not where the creativity lies...it's [in] a completion of a creative vision."

Place & Spirit:

sustaining the creative life



"I think it would be important to me to have this environment, not necessarily outside of myself, but at least inside myself..."

"The essence of the people in the struggle and the suffering, all of that is completely embedded in me and who I am."

"There's gotta be truth behind it."

"I meditate. I do mindfulness meditation. Almost every day – you know, it's the thing you mean to do every day, so you do it five days a week – But that ...stilling and grounding and just sitting and being with the breath – that's been a practice, gosh, for the last ten years of my life. A transformative one. I think – I know it influences the way I will sit down to write something, or to do a piece of art – it's to be still with that and really sink into the moment of what I'm describing..."

"... a lot of people are so stuck on the basics, that spirituality and emotional well-being and physical health [are left out in the] cold. I think that people need to be aware of the fact that there are other possibilities, and that there are other things to life besides just maintaining..."

"...I think what inspires me toward work or pieces of art is the way that people can take their own connection to God or spirituality, to what ever you think is more profound than a concrete wall, or even a tree, and put that in a piece of work and completely feel that."

"...people mythologize themselves out of fear. ...it takes a lot to say...I'm just going to stop [mythologizing myself.] *Interviewer: What made you willing to say 'No, authenticity is worth the risk? I'm willing to be skinless, and to tell the truth.' Why?* Wow, that's a really good question. [pauses] I wrote better poems!"

Individual Struggles, Collective Strengths:

finding thriving



What if what we need here, we already have here?

- ~ artistic integrity ~
- ~ growth on one's own terms ~
- ~ space to cultivate one's own voice ~
- ~ the ability to showcase important work by others ~
- ~ a rich and sustaining sense of place and relationship with nature ~
- ~ the possibility of creating low-cost cooperative housing & studios for artists ~
- ~ the possibility of creating low-cost health-insurance pools or cooperatives for artists ~
- ~ energy and willingness to collaborate so these things can manifest in our communities ~

"I really had to use my skills as a survivor. It wasn't just expression for fun. Merging those two realities of the financial necessities and the spiritual necessity to create...that was huge for me."

"Collaborative relationships among artists are special connections. Yet, as rich as these connections are, it is amazing how a structured, appreciative exploration of an artist's voice and practice can open doors of understanding. Behind these doors live a robust core of practical wisdom and depth of purpose. Identifying needs and challenges in a community setting sets the stage for structures that meet those needs. From the practical to the aesthetic, giving voice [to] the essentials creates opportunities for innovation."

"...Then the Women's Movement came. That's why this place [a private retreat for women artists] is here. ...So many of my friends were artists - I wanted people to have a place to just come, and be quiet, and just do whatever they needed to do... [it] excited me to no end. ...I wanted it to be a major retreat. ...The whole thing works by word of mouth. There's a feeling of intimacy that I care about. Just knowing...that you've given space to a woman for her own creative life is incredibly fulfilling. ...I care about women, I love women, and that's what I want to have happen to as many women as possible. And I really define the word artist in a bigger sense than what's happened...so far."

The traditional way to think about strengthening a region is reliance upon outside dollars



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...but the Greater Franklin County is already rich in creative resources: discovering and supporting what bounty already exists here leads to sustainable and abundant practices for everyone.

Focusing on Assets



MAKES FRANKLIN COUNTY STRONGER AND
MORE VIBRANT

What is Transformative Participatory Action Research?

Rethinking the Creative Economy:

How do we think of economy as a way to sustain or improve quality of life, rather than as something preoccupied with growth?

Interviews:

An opportunity to learn from the already-successful practices our peers are performing in our communities. An opportunity for both interviewer and interviewee to learn, to self-reflect, and to recognize the work we are doing.

Asset Mapping:

What qualities do we most value in our lives? What allows us to be creative people? What creates energy and excitement? What do we need to create balance that works?

Interview Techniques:

Open-ended questions that allow stories to be told. Patience and trust in what will emerge. Respect. Gentle guidance back to core concerns. Genuine desire to find out what people are doing—and how, and why.

Some of what emerged for the researchers:

creativity & learning

community

learning

sense of place

vision

self-reflection

curiosity

inverting sense of scale

sharing & gifting

fostering relationships



sustainability

society

environment
value

deconstructing boundaries

oral tradition

space of possibility

responsibility

diverse economies

Moving Forward, Bridging and Building:

holding open the space of possibility in Franklin County

Creating Multiple Realities: Phase I

An art show featuring the work of the Project Researchers.

Invitational Exhibition: April 1-30, 2011

Opening Reception: April 2, 2011, 1-6pm

Location: NACUL Gallery, 592 Main St, Amherst, MA 01002

Creating Multiple Realities: Phase II

This fall, there will be an art show featuring the work of the Project Interviewees: check the Rethinking the Creative Economy website for more information!

You, bringing these ideas back to your communities

Our hope is that these ideas will open up a new sense of possibility and agency in each of you, and that you will envision and create new artistic bounties in Franklin County through creative collaborations and the sharing of resources. Keep in touch!

"So when the good stuff is happening here, it's pretty exciting because people leave very excited and they say, 'Oh wow, I didn't realize this could be done.' People are always AMAZED at the Art Kitchen and by what I'm doing. And I'm kind of thinking, 'You know what? ANYBODY could do this! You could do it in your place; you could do it in your place.'
You know, it doesn't really take a lot to do something."

Connect with us on the Rethinking the Creative Economy website:
<http://www.rethinkingthecreativeeconomy.org>

The Rethinking the Creative Economy project was funded by:



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